

# Bible Class Primers

EDITED BY

FRANCIS TALMOND, D.D., 1852-1888

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## THE SABBATH

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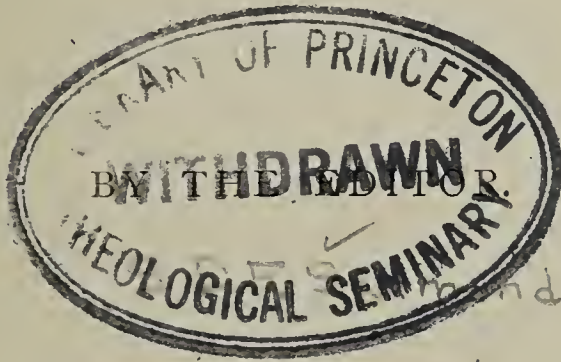
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### ERRATUM.

*P. 19, l. 8, for "the Archbishop" read "Bishop"*

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### NOTE.

#### WELFARE OF YOUTH EXAMINATIONS.

*Candidates in the Senior Grade take the whole Primer.*

*Candidates in the Middle Grade take from § 17 (First Mention of the Sabbath in the Books of Moses) to the end of the Primer.*

*Candidates in the Junior Grade take from § 17 to the end of the Primer, omitting §§ 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 38, 39, 64.*

# THE SABBATH.

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I. INTRODUCTORY.—The Day of Sacred Rest is a subject of great historical interest and of still greater practical importance. Much has been written on it, not only by theologians but by philanthropists and thinkers of many different schools, and various views have been taken of its authority, its meaning, its antiquity, and its observance. We are to study it chiefly as it appears in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments. Both in the Church of Israel and in the Christian Church such a day has been recognised as an institution of divine authority and gracious purpose. Among the Jews of ancient time it had a position of such sanctity and honour that Greek and Roman writers singled it out as one of the most peculiar marks of a peculiar people, and mocked them for the regard in which they held it. In Christendom its claims have also been reverently acknowledged and its benefits deeply confessed. This has been most the case, too, with the strongest Christian peoples and in the best Christian times. The most devout men in all ages have felt it to be a chief help to personal and domestic piety, an invaluable aid to worship, a protection and support of the sanctity of the home. The wisest men in all generations have acknow-

ledged it to be at the roots of national health, stability, and progress. The adherents of the most diverse creeds, and eminent men outside the Christian Church, have joined hands in pronouncing it one of the most precious of all institutions, an inheritance to be guarded with jealous care.

2. ANALOGOUS INSTITUTIONS AMONG THE HEATHEN NATIONS.—While the Day of Rest occupies a peculiar position in the Jewish and Christian religions, there are things in some sense analogous to it outside these. The idea of sacred days has existed in various forms in other systems of faith and among other nations. The name, the particular day, the relation to the week, the uses to which the institution has been dedicated, have differed. But the need or the benefit of an ordinance of this order has been widely felt, and where a day of this kind has been established it has usually had the two purposes of attention to religious rites and cessation of ordinary work. With the Druses Thursday is the sacred day. There are tribes with whom Wednesday has occupied the same position. The Mohammedans set apart Friday as their Sabbath. The Arab tribes, long before Mohammed's time, the Phœnicians, and other ancient peoples had their stated days of religious observance. The Slavonians are understood to have had their weekly festival. The Persians are reported to have made the eighth day, and the Peruvians the ninth day, a festal day or day of rest. The Romans had their *Saturnalia*, a festival of remotest antiquity, held in honour of the god Saturnus, whose name remains in our word Saturday;



and, in the times of the Roman Republic, one day in the month of December was specially devoted to the religious observances connected with that festival. The Greeks had the institution of a tenth day. The Egyptians at one time celebrated the tenth day, at a later period the seventh. The resemblance between those days and the Sabbath is only of a general kind, and in none of these instances of distant analogy do we find anything distinctly the same in character as the Sabbath of the Hebrews. But there is another case of a very different kind. That is the *seventh-day* ordinance which, as our authorities on Assyrian and Babylonian questions inform us, has in recent times been discovered to have existed among the ancient Chaldeans. The special interest of this lies in the fact that these Chaldeans were of the same stock as the Hebrews, and are known to have had traditions of the Creation, the Deluge, and other things of which we read in the Hebrew Scriptures.

3. THE BABYLONIAN SABBATH.—A list of the days of one of the Babylonian months has been recovered. It specifies the god or gods to whom each particular day is dedicated, and the offerings or ceremonies which are appointed for the occasion. In this list the seventh, the fourteenth, the twenty-first, and the twenty-eighth days are described as days of rest. They are understood to be designated Sabbaths, the name being taken to be *Sabattuv*, corresponding to the Hebrew word for the day. Certain things are forbidden to be done on these days. The ruler of the great nations is not to eat certain meats. He is not to change his clothes or

put on white garments. He is not to offer sacrifice, or drive in his chariot, or issue decrees. There is to be no muttering of the augur, neither is medicine to be used for the sickness of the body. It is inferred from this that the Babylonians and Assyrians had their Sabbath, and that it was observed on the seventh day. It is inferred further by some of our acknowledged authorities that the institution must have been of very ancient date, and must have existed indeed in the days of the Accadians, an extremely ancient and remarkable people who preceded the Assyrians and Babylonians, and are held in honour as the fathers of astronomy and the inventors of the cuneiform or wedge-shaped style of writing.

4. **THE WEEK OF SEVEN DAYS.**—The day of rest, which the recently discovered tablets appear to present as a Babylonian institution, is connected with the natural division of the month into four periods of seven days. The division of time into weeks of seven days also existed among the ancient Hebrews, and both among them and among the Babylonians the number seven was a sacred number. So when in Genesis ii. 3 it is said that “God blessed the seventh day and hallowed it,” the sanctity of that day is “connected with the institution of the week of seven days as an entirety, and with the sanctity of the number *seven* in general” (Schrader). This division of time is supposed to have been suggested by the phases of the moon or by the number of the planets known to the ancients. It is of unknown antiquity in Asia and Africa. The Arabs, the Persians, and other Eastern peoples were ac-

quainted with it. It existed in early times among some of the races in the African continent. But it was not universal. Nations like the Egyptians and the Greeks had a week of ten days. The Romans did not introduce the week of seven days till the fourth century of the Christian era. It was not known among the pre-Christian Americans. The Mexicans seem to have had a week of five days. But the Babylonians and the Hebrews both had the week of seven days, and observed the seventh day as a day of rest. That the septenary division of time was known to the Hebrews long before the age of Moses is inferred from various things which appear in the book of Genesis. The naming of the eighth day as that on which every man child of the Hebrews was to be circumcised under the covenant with Abraham (xvii. 12, xxi. 4); the notice of the *week* in the story of Jacob (xxix. 27); and the mention of the period of seven days four times over in the narrative of the Flood (vii. 4, 10, viii. 10, 12), are the passages specially referred to as implying this. And it is the opinion of our best inquirers that the week of seven days was an ancient Chaldean institution, and that the Hebrews brought it with them when they left Ur of the Chaldees, the South Babylonian town from which Abraham, the father of the Hebrew people, migrated.

5. THE SACRED NUMBER. — In connection with this septenary division of time which lies at the basis of the institution of the Sabbath, it is also to be observed that a peculiar sacredness and significance belonged to the number seven. This was the case, not only with the Hebrews and the Baby-

lonians, but with other ancient nations, the Indians, the Persians (*cf.* Esther i. 5, 10, 14), the Chinese, and to some extent the Greeks and Romans. But it was peculiarly so with the Hebrews. With them it was the chief symbolical number, surpassing in this respect the twelve, the twenty-four, and all other numbers to which such a significance was attached. With them, too, the *seventh* had a sacredness beyond even that given to the *seven*. So the Old Testament begins with the narrative of the Creation of the world in six days and the Rest of God on the seventh, and our English New Testament closes with a book, that of the Revelation of St John, which has *seven* for its constantly recurring number, and gives in a series of sevens intimations of events and truths of weightiest moment. The *seven* and the *seventh* in the Scriptures are thus the representatives of great ideas, *completeness*, *perfection*, *sanctity*, and the like. Among other ideas they appear specially to betoken those of religious *duration* and religious *periodicity* or *recurrence*. Seven days, for example, were the appointed length of the great Festivals—the passover (Exod. xii. 15), and the feast of tabernacles (Deut. xvi. 13). So, too, the seventh year was a “sabbath of rest unto the land” (Lev. xxv. 4); the Jubilee was after seven times seven years (Lev. xxv. 8-11); the great day of atonement was in the seventh month (Lev. xvi. 29, 30); Pentecost, or the feast of weeks, was seven weeks after passover (Lev. xxiii. 15, 16). In like manner, the arrangements of the tabernacle, the offerings, the prescriptions on the subject of wrongs, and other things of the Law, were largely in sevens—the seven

parts of the candlestick and the seven lamps (Exod. xxv. 31-37); the seven times that the blood of the sacrificial victim was to be sprinkled (Lev. iv. 6, xvi. 14); the seven sprinklings of the water of purification (Lev. xiv. 51); the seven things named for offering in sacrifice (oxen, sheep, goats, pigeons, wheat, oil, wine); the seven victims for special occasions (Num. xxiii. 1, 14, 29); the seven times declared for the punishment of sins (Lev. xxvi. 18).

6. THE WITNESS TO THE BENEFICENCE OF THE DAY OF REST.—The history of opinion shows that, as in the case of other religious institutions, so in that of the Day of Rest, even those who have been at one in honouring it have not thought alike on everything connected with it. Various questions touching its foundation and its observance have been matters of dispute, and still continue to receive different answers from different Churches, and from reverent thinkers of different mental habits. But these variations in opinion are of small moment in comparison with the unity of the testimony to the inestimable value of the Day. Men who stand far apart in the ideas which they have been led to form on certain points of great interest relating to its origin, its history, and its claims, speak with one voice of this institution as “the suggestion of infinite beneficence.” Those who have thought most profoundly on the secret of the welfare of communities, those who have been best entitled to speak from experience of different professions and ways of life, and those who have walked most closely with God, have borne harmonious witness to the need for such a Day, and to the good which it brings to the

weak and burdened life of humanity. The poets of our own land and of other climes, the men to whom God has given the gift of seeing deeper into the nature of things than all others, have had visions of its grace, and have celebrated its praises. Thinkers of regal intellect have done homage to its sacred claims. Divines like Richard Hooker, one of the chief ornaments of the Church of England, have owned that "we are to account the sanctification of one day in seven a duty which God's immutable law doth exact for ever." Sages like Lord Bacon, the father of modern science, have confessed that "God demands and segregates for Himself a tenth of our substance, but a seventh of our time." Men of authority in the ancient heathen world, like the Emperor Julian, were so affected by what they saw of its action as to think of introducing something of its kind into pagan society. The experience of the ages is on its side, the voice of civilised humanity attests its benefits. It may prepare us for a sympathetic study of this great institution, if we begin by recalling some of those remarkable testimonies to its worth which have been offered, in older times or in more recent, by men who have taken the foremost places in their several orders of life and usefulness, and who have looked at it from different points of view.

7. ITS SERVICE TO BODY AND MIND.—The refreshment provided for our physical and mental being by the institution of the Day of Rest is attested by acknowledged authorities in medical science. Among distinguished physiologists, Dr Carpenter, to take one well-known instance, declares

that the testimony of his "own experience is very strong to the importance of the complete rest and change of thought once in the week." Dr Farre, in his evidence before a Committee of the House of Commons, expresses himself thus : "Although the night apparently equalises the circulation well, yet it does not sufficiently restore its balance for the attainment of a long life. Hence one day in seven, by the bounty of Providence, is thrown in as a day of compensation, to perfect by its repose the animal system. Physiologically considered, power saved is power gained, and the waste of power from every kind of excitement defeats the purposes of the day. . . . This is said simply as a physician, and without reference to the theological question; but if you consider further the proper effect of real Christianity, namely, peace of mind, confiding trust in God, and goodwill to man, you will perceive in this source of renewed vigour to the mind, and through the mind to the body, an additional spring of life imparted from this higher use of the Sabbath as a holy rest." Others of like distinction in medical science speak in similar terms of the physical and intellectual benefits of the Day of Rest. Their witness is confirmed by men of eminence in art and letters, and by other toilers of the brain. The great painter, Sir David Wilkie, prints of whose pictures adorn many a Scottish home, gave it as his experience that "those artists who wrought on Sunday were soon disqualified from working at all." Samuel Taylor Coleridge, philosopher and poet, to whom we owe *The Rhyme of the Ancient Mariner* and *Christabel*, tells us that he felt "as if God had, by giving the Sabbath,

given fifty-two springs in the year." Isaac Taylor, the distinguished essayist, declared himself prepared to affirm that, "to the studious especially, and whether younger or older, a Sabbath well spent—spent in happy exercises of the heart, devotional and domestic—a Sunday given to the soul—is the best of all means of refreshment to the mere intellect." And these are but a few out of many such tributes.

**8. ITS SERVICE TO SOCIETY.**—Its salutary influence on the moral health of communities, and the ministry which in various ways it renders to the prosperity of States, are acknowledged by many of those who are admittedly best qualified to speak. There are few names to match that of Adam Smith in Political Economy, and few better known in Law than that of Blackstone. It was the verdict of the former that "the Sabbath, as a political institution, is of inestimable value, independently of its claim to divine authority." It was the judgment of the latter that "a corruption of morals usually follows the profanation of the Sabbath." Its economic advantage is widely recognised. Many of the great employers of labour give it as their experience that more work and better is produced under a system which preserves the weekly rest than under one which provides for toil all the seven days. William Wilberforce, whose name is so honourably connected with the story of the Abolition of Slavery in the British dominions, leaves it on record that when it was proposed, on the occasion of a certain war, to "work all Sunday in one of the royal manufactories, for a continuance, not for an occasional service, it was found that the workmen who obtained Govern-



ment consent to abstain from working on Sundays executed in a few months even more work than the others." None are more emphatic in their affirmations of these benefits of the day than our greatest statesmen. The late John Bright, for example, expressed it as his conviction that "the stability and character of our country, and the advancement of our race, depend . . . very largely upon the mode in which the Day of Rest, which seems to have been specially adapted to the needs of mankind, shall be used and observed." Another, who has been at the head of several Governments, has repeatedly spoken of the observance of this Day as a "main prop of the religious character of the country," and as, "from a moral, social, and physical point of view, a duty of absolute consequence." And Lord Macaulay, great as a statesman and greater as a man of letters, once and again expended his rich eloquence on the defence of the Day. "The natural difference," he said, "between Campania and Spitzbergen is trifling when compared with the difference between a country inhabited by men full of bodily and mental vigour and a country inhabited by men sunk in bodily and mental decrepitude. Therefore it is that we are not poorer but richer, because we have through many ages rested from our labour one day in seven. That day is not lost. While industry is suspended, while the plough lies in the furrow, while the Exchange is silent, while no smoke ascends from the factory, a process is going on quite as important to the wealth of the nation as any process which is performed on more busy days. Man. the machine of machines, is repairing and

winding up, so that he returns to his labours on Monday with clearer intellect, with livelier spirits, with renewed corporeal vigour." And again he declared himself in these clear terms : " If the Sunday had not been observed as a day of rest, but the axe, the spade, the anvil, and the loom had been at work every day during the last three centuries, I have not the smallest doubt that we should have been at this moment a poorer people and a less civilised people than we are."

9. **ITS SERVICE TO PIETY.**—The devoutest men in all ages, and in every variety of circumstance and occupation, have borne witness to the need of the Day of Rest for the preservation and elevation of the religious life, have spoken of their own delight in it, and have owned their indebtedness to its gracious influences and precious opportunities. The testimony given to his children by Sir Matthew Hale, one of the most upright and distinguished judges of an older time, well known as it is, is in place here : " I have, by long and sound experience," he says, " found that the due observance of the Sabbath and of the duties of it has been of singular comfort and advantage to me ; the observance of this Day hath ever joined to it a blessing on the rest of my time." Tyndale, the man who expatriated himself in order to provide the English people with a translation of the New Testament into their own tongue, and who died, a victim of assassination, with the prayer, " Lord, open the eyes of the King of England," on his lips, made it his custom (as John Fox tells us), when living in Antwerp in the execution of his great work, to go on the Sunday to

“some one merchant’s chamber or other, whither came many other merchants, and unto them would be read some one parcel of Scripture ; the which proceeded so fruitfully, sweetly, and gently from him, much like to the writing of John the Evangelist, that it was a heavenly comfort and joy to the audience to hear him read the Scriptures.” Robert Leighton, the Archbishop of Dunblane who bore the white flower of a saintly life in Scotland’s troubled times, speaks of the “very life of religion” as depending on the observance of this day. “Consider but if we should intermit the keeping of it for one year,” he says, “to what a height profaneness would rise in those that fear not God ; which are yet restrained (though not converted) by the preaching of the Word and their outward partaking of public worship ; yea, those that are most spiritual would find themselves losers by the intermission.” Not less clearly were its benefits recognised by the great German Reformer. “It is good, and even necessary,” wrote Martin Luther, “that men should keep a particular day in the week, on which they are to meditate, hear, and learn, for all cannot command every day ; and nature also requires that one day in the week should be kept quiet, without labour either for man or beast.” What it has been to Christian men who have gone out to occupy the posts of difficulty in heathen lands is seen from what is recorded of Henry Martyn’s joy in it, and his grateful, scrupulous use of it, and from the glimpses we get of the life of the noble Eliot, “the Apostle of the Indians.” Of the latter it is stated that “he knew that our whole religion fares according to our Sabbaths ; that poor Sabbaths

make poor Christians; and that a strictness in our Sabbaths inspires a vigour into all our other duties." For this reason he brought his Indians to "bind themselves, as a principal means of confirming them in Christianity, 'To remember the Sabbath-day to keep it holy, as long as we live.'" And among a mass of similar testimonies which it would be easy to cite, one of a remarkable kind comes from the philosopher John Locke. "Besides his particular calling for the support of life," it runs, "every one has a concern in a future life, which he is bound to look after. This engages his thoughts in religion; and here it mightily lies upon him to understand and reason aright. Men, therefore, cannot be excused from understanding and framing the general notions relating to religious right. The one day in seven, besides other days of rest, allows in the Christian world time enough for this (had they no other idle hours), if they would but make use of these vacancies from their daily labour, and apply themselves to an improvement of knowledge with as much diligence as they often do to a great many other things that are useless."

10. THE WITNESS OF THE POETS.—Any notice of the testimony which has been borne by so many different classes to the debt of the individual and the debt of society to this sacred institution would be incomplete without some reference to the estimate formed of it by those elect interpreters of the spiritual meaning of life and nature and ordinance, the poets. The place which the Day has in the hymns of the Christian Church needs no mention. Words of sweet suggestion and grateful melody,

which are consecrated to its praise in many a familiar sacred song, will at once occur to mind. But the opulent stream of English poetry, apart from the rich hymnology of the land, has brought us many a gracious tribute to the Sabbath or the Lord's Day. Edmund Spenser, to whose superb imagination we owe the *Faerie Queen*, Mrs Browning, James Grahame, Hartley Coleridge, Oliver Wendell Holmes, John Greenleaf Whittier, Henry Vaughan, George Herbert, James D. Burns, and many more are among the poets of the Day of Rest. Some words from the three last-mentioned will find a fitting place here. Henry Vaughan, "the Silurist," the Welsh mystic of the seventeenth century, is best known to us perhaps by the pathetic stanzas on departed friends—

"They are all gone into the world of light  
And I alone sit lingering here."

But he says no less charmingly of the Sundays of his life—

"Bright shadows of true rest ! some shoots of bliss ;  
Heaven once a week ;  
The next world's gladness prepossest in this ;  
A day to seek  
Eternity in time ; the steps by which  
We climb above all ages ; lamps that light  
Man through his heap of dark-days ; and the rich  
And full redemption of the whole week's flight."

In kindred strains George Herbert, the saintly rector of Bemerton, celebrated the day which had brought him gladness, and sang his tender Sunday poem to his lute when near his end—

“ O Day most calm, most bright,  
 The fruit of this, the next world’s bud,  
 The indorsement of supreme delight,  
 Writ by a Friend, and with His blood ;  
 The couch of time, care’s balm and bay !  
 The weeks were dark but for thy light !  
 Thy torch doth show the way ! ”

And in terms to match any for choice expression and chastened sentiment, James Drummond Burns, a singer less widely known than those others, expressed what the evening of the Lord’s Day had been to him—

“ O time of tranquil joy and holy feeling !  
 When over earth God’s Spirit from above  
 Spreads out His wings of love !  
 When sacred thoughts, like angels, come appealing  
 To our tent doors ; O eve, to earth and heaven  
 The sweetest of the seven, ”

II. THE UNIQUE POSITION OF THE DAY AS AN INSTITUTION OF BENEFICENCE.—  
 The peculiarity of this Day among historical institutions ; the purpose impressed on it, so unlike the promptings of common human selfishness ; the experience of its gracious influence on the moral and religious life of man, on the good of society, and on the strength and prosperity of states, speak to its peculiar claims. These broad facts point to a higher origin for it than the operation of political sagacity or common religious sentiment. They raise at least a presumption in favour of this prior to inquiry. They have been accepted indeed by many as bespeaking for it a foundation in the Divine Will and a permanent place in man’s life.

“The divine origin of the Sabbath,” says Dr Croly, “might almost be proved from its opposition to the lower propensities of mankind. In no age of the world, since labour was known, would any master of the serf, the slave, or the cattle, have *spontaneously* given up a seventh part of their toil. No human legislator would have proposed such a law of property, or, if he had, no nation would have endured it. . . . The Sabbath in its whole character is so strongly opposed to the avarice, the heartlessness, and the irreligion of man that, except in the days of Moses and Joshua, it has probably never been observed with due reverence by any nation of the world.” And Dr Thomas Chalmers, taking up another branch of the same broad argument from experience, puts this aspect of the question thus : “For the permanency of the Sabbath, we might argue its place in the Decalogue, where it stands enshrined among the moralities of a rectitude that is immutable and everlasting ; and we might argue the traditional homage and observancy in which it has been held since the days of the Apostles ; and we might argue the undoubted and experimental fact that, where this day is best kept, there all the other graces of Christianity are in most healthful exercise and preservation. But we rather waive, for the present, all these considerations ; and would rest the perpetuity of the Sabbath law on the affirmation that, while a day of unmeaning drudgery to the formalist, it is to every real Christian a day of holy and heavenly delight—that he loves the law and so has it graven on the tablet of his heart, with a power of sovereignty over his actions which it

never had when it was only engraven on a tablet of stone, or on the tablet of an outward revelation—that, wherever there is a true principle of religion, the consecration of the Sabbath is felt, not as a bondage, but is felt to be the very beatitude of the soul; and that, therefore, the keeping of it, instead of being viewed as a slavish exaction on the time and services of the outer man, is the direct and genuine fruit of a spiritual impulse on the best affections of the inner man.”

12. THE PRESUMPTION OF ITS DIVINE CLAIMS AND THE PROOF.—An institution to the beneficent purpose and operation of which so great a cloud of witnesses, gathered from quarters so diverse, bear eloquent testimony, has peculiar demands upon our regard, and suggests for itself a higher than human authority. Its proved adaptation to the preservation and promotion of the moral life of society and the religious life of the individual, establishes a presumption in favour of its divine claims. But this presumption has to be tested by the history of the institution. We shall study it, therefore, as it comes before us in the records of the Old and New Testaments, with the view of ascertaining its foundation, its authority, its distinctive character, and the method of its observance. It is necessary also to look beyond these records and examine others of different kinds. We shall have to look into the literature of other ancient nations, into the Jewish books which were in circulation between the close of Old Testament prophecy and the beginning of the Christian era, and into the writings of Christian authors who



flourished in the centuries immediately succeeding the close of the New Testament Canon. The first of these three kinds of literature will show us what other nations had in the form of institutions in any measure resembling the Sabbath. The second will help us to understand how the original Mosaic Sabbath was disastrously changed before our Lord's Advent, and made a heavy and intolerable yoke by the Rabbis. The third will enable us to follow the course by which the institution passed from the seventh day to the first.

13. THE ORIGINALITY OF THE HEBREW SABBATH.—Whatever may be thought to resemble it in the institutions of other nations, the Sabbath, as it existed in Israel, had a character and a position entirely its own. It has been held by some to have been a derived institution. Even were that made out to be the case, its distinctive nature and claims would not necessarily be affected. Other things which are known to us as of sacred meaning and divine authority in Israel existed in certain forms elsewhere, and were taken over and clothed with a special sacredness and significance in the religion of Israel and in the service of the God of Revelation. Circumcision, for example, was not a practice confined to the chosen people, although with them it was made a rite with a peculiar meaning, a sign of the covenant-relation between God and Israel, the token of entrance into the community of the living God. But in the case of the Sabbath of the Old Testament, the proof of its derived nature fails. It has been asserted, for instance, that it was borrowed from the Egyptians. But

that is disproved by the fact that in the ancient period of Egyptian history the week was one of ten days, not of seven. The Roman historian Tacitus, again, in speaking of the rest of the seventh day among the Jews, mentions that some said it was adopted because that day "brought with it a termination of their toils;" but that others explained it to be "an observance in honour of Saturn," one possible reason for which was "the circumstance that of the seven stars which rule the destinies of men, Saturn moves in the highest orbit and with the mightiest power, and that many of the heavenly bodies complete their revolutions and courses in multiples of seven." Some have followed the account of it thus noticed by Tacitus, giving it an astrological meaning and supposing that it was connected originally with the worship of the deity Saturnus, to whom the ancient Latin people ascribed the introduction of agriculture and the arts of civilised life, and in whose honour a great annual festival was held, during which business was suspended and the schools and law-courts closed. But this is inconsistent with what we know both of Saturn's festival and of the Sabbath. The two things were essentially different, the former being rather a Harvest-home, celebrating the completion of the agricultural labour of the year, and devoted to merriment and forms of amusement resembling those indulged in at the Carnival season in Rome. Further, the ancient Hebrews are not known to have distinguished the days of the week by assigning them to the several planets and naming them after these. There is nothing in the Old Testament to show that the Hebrew Sabbath had any astrological

meaning. The days of the week are never named after the planets in the Hebrew Scriptures, as they are in part even in our own calendar. As far as we know, the days of the ancient Hebrew week were designated by numbers, the first day, the second day, and so forth.

14. RELATION OF THE HEBREW SABBATH TO THE BABYLONIAN DAYS OF REST.—It has also been asserted that the Hebrew Sabbath was borrowed from the Babylonians. But the resemblances which we have noticed between the Babylonian practice and the Hebrew do not lead us to this conclusion. Differences remain which mark out the Hebrew Sabbath as a distinct and independent institution. For, in the first place, the 19th day of the Babylonian month referred to in the list mentioned above was also a day of rest, subject to the same prescriptions as the 7th, 14th, 21st, and 28th. In the second place, the Babylonian week and seventh day had astrological connections which are strange to the Hebrew. In the third place, the Hebrew Sabbath was appointed to be observed on the last day of a cycle of seven which was not dependent on the changes of the moon and did not vary. And further, the *character* of the day was entirely different in the two cases. It is the opinion, indeed, of some who are entitled to be heard on such a question, that the Babylonian day is described as “a day of rest for the heart,” and is thus in affinity with the Sabbath of the Old Testament, which had the note of gladness. But this is doubtful, and the conclusion most approved is rather that the Babylonian seventh day, like the

Roman day of Saturn, was an unfavourable or black day, on which it was not possible even to offer sacrifices. In which case it differs essentially from the Hebrew institution.

15. THE ANTIQUITY OF THE SABBATH: THE MAIN ARGUMENTS ON THE SUBJECT.

—The Sabbath as it appears in the Old Testament, therefore, is an institution of an order and an origin entirely its own. It is one firmly planted in the history of the chosen people, in all ages one of their most distinctive possessions, deeply rooted in their religious life, and contributing largely to make them what they have been. The question is how ancient it is. It is clear from the Old Testament that it is a Mosaic institution, as ancient at least as the Law. But it is asked whether it is pre-Mosaic ; and if so, how far back it can be traced ; whether to patriarchal or even to primeval times. This is one of the questions relating to the Sabbath on which opinion has been most divided. That it existed, as distinct and unique, before Moses, has been inferred from the terms of the Fourth Commandment, “*Remember* the Sabbath-day,” which have been taken to indicate not the introduction of a new observance, but the recollection and recalled regard of an old one. But it is pointed out that the word “Remember” does not necessarily mean more than be *mindful* of it, have a respect for it, or give heed to it. In favour of its existence in the patriarchal age it is argued that it is connected with the division of time into weeks of seven days ; that this division of time is of most ancient date and widespread extent ; that it is shown to have been known

to the patriarchs by the references which we have already noticed, namely, the "seven days" which Noah "stayed" before he sent forth the dove (Gen. viii. 10, 11), the "week" in the case of Jacob and Laban (Gen. xxix. 27, 28), and similar notes of time ; and that it is difficult to account for its extreme antiquity and its diffusion among peoples so numerous and so far separated from each other, except by the supposition of a Divine Revelation of it. To this, however, it is replied that the week of seven days, though wide-spread, was far from universal. The Greeks, for example, divided their months into decades ; the Romans had more than one division of time, into Kalends, Nones, Ides, and also into *Nundines* or market periods of nine days ; and other peoples had weeks of five or ten days. It is urged, further, that there is no necessary connection between the week of seven days and the Sabbath, as is proved by the fact that the one has existed without the other. The Ashantees in Africa, the Druses, and others, have had the week of seven days without regarding the seventh as their sacred day. In support of the primeval origin of the Day, the appeal is made to the statement in the record of Creation that "God blessed the seventh day and hallowed it" (Gen. ii. 3). But to this, again, it is replied,—as for example by Paley,—that the words do not necessarily mean that the seventh day was blessed and sanctified *then*, but that this was the *reason* why it came to be sanctified in Israel, and that "the order of connection and not of time introduced the mention of the Sabbath in the history of the subject which it was ordained to commemorate."

16. THE ANTIQUITY OF THE SABBATH: CONCLUSIONS ON THE SUBJECT.—The arguments which have been briefly stated, though they do not cover all that is involved in the question, are sufficient to show how the case stands. Names of great authority are among those who affirm the Mosaic origin of the Sabbath, and deny that there is any historical trace of it farther back. Names of great authority, particularly of older date, and among others Lord Bacon, are among those who affirm its primeval origin. The fact that it is promulgated in the Decalogue does not necessarily imply that it did not exist in any form before that. The mention made of it in connection with the giving of the manna in a chapter (Exod. xvi.) which we shall immediately consider, though not entirely conclusive, is understood by some of our best scholars to indicate that the idea of a Sabbath was not altogether strange to the Israelites of that time. The words of benediction pronounced on the seventh day in the record of God's creative work (Gen. ii. 3), may certainly mean that in the writer's view the blessing was *then* put upon the day which he knew to attach to it when he wrote. And the circumstance that it was solemnly instituted as one of the great ordinances of the Mosaic economy, with a distinctive significance and a special order of observance, does not necessarily imply that this was absolutely its first appearance, and that the Day of Rest was unknown in any form previous to that date. The answer which is given to this question by the Westminster Confession of Faith is, that the Sabbath is a primeval ordinance.

Its doctrine is that it is a Divine institution, resting on a Divine Law, rooted in the constitution of man, enacted by the Creator at the beginning and re-enacted through Moses. Its words are these: "As it is of the law of nature, that, in general, a due proportion of time be set apart for the worship of God; so, in His Word, by a positive, moral, and perpetual commandment, binding all men in all ages, He hath particularly appointed one day in seven for a Sabbath, to be kept holy unto Him; which, from the beginning of the world to the resurrection of Christ was the last day of the week; and from the resurrection of Christ, was changed into the first day of the week; which in Scripture is called the Lord's Day, and is to be continued to the end of the world as the Christian Sabbath." This has been the Confessional doctrine of the great Presbyterian Churches in England, Scotland, and America. It was the doctrine of the learned Puritan divines who wrote in the reigns of Elizabeth and the Stuart kings. It was also the view of not a few of the leading theologians of the English Church, including Bishops Hooper, Horsley, Beveridge, Burnett, and others.

17. FIRST MENTION OF THE SABBATH IN THE BOOKS OF MOSES (Exodus xvi. 1-14).—Passing from the question of the antiquity of the Day of Rest, we shall study the Sabbath as an institution of the Law and trace its history as it can be gathered first from the Old Testament itself. Some of the ancient Jewish Rabbis were of opinion that it first appears in connection with the incident at Marah. They supposed that the *statute* and

*ordinance* which are said to have been made on the occasion of the healing of the bitter waters were the law of the Sabbath. But the 'statute and ordinance' mentioned in Exodus xv. 25 are explained by the words of promise, conditional on obedience, which follow in verse 26; and the meaning of the whole statement is that the events of Marah were made the occasion of instructing the people in their relation to their God, and in the privileges and responsibilities which that relation carried with it. The first mention of the Sabbath by name is in the next chapter, in connection with the gift of manna. The Israelites had made their way from Elim into the wilderness of Sin. Worn out by the fatigues of the march, the means of subsistence failing them, and famine seeming to be their terrible fate in this burnt waste, the whole congregation broke out into murmurings. They cried out against Moses and Aaron, wishing that they had died in Egypt where, slaves though they were, they sat by the flesh-pots and ate bread to the full, rather than perish of starvation in this hungry desolation. The Divine word came to Moses, and by him was communicated to the faithless people, giving assurance of sufficient provision. But the promised support was to come in a way to try their trust and dependence. It was to be given day by day, a day's portion at a time, and nothing more, except that on the sixth day it was to be doubled. It was to be flesh in the evening and bread in the morning. At even they were to know that it was the Lord who had brought them out of Egypt, and at morn they were to see His glory. The word was quickly made



good. Summoned by Aaron in the morning, the whole congregation looked to the dismal wilderness in which they had feared to perish, and out of the cloud flashed the storm-glory which gave token of the Lord's presence. In the evening the promised flesh came in the form of quails covering the camp. Travellers tell us of these birds, how they pass over those parts in dense masses in the course of their autumn and spring migrations to and from Africa; how they fly near the ground, birds of earth rather than of air, as an old Roman writer calls them; and how easy it is to catch and kill them in their resting moments, or as they fly low and heavy when the weariness of the journey tells on them. In the morning, too, the promised bread came in the form of the manna, a small round white thing, compared to coriander seed, which lay like hoar-frost on the ground when the dew rose—something resembling in certain respects the sugary gum of the tamarisk tree which the Arabs have called manna, but described here in terms which are not quite appropriate either to that or to the manna of commerce now brought to us from Sicily.

18. THE LAWS OF THE MANNA (Exodus xvi. 15-30).—This new provision, the "angels' food" of the Psalm (lxxviii. 25), the "bread from heaven," of which both Nehemiah (ix. 15) and our Lord Himself spoke (John vi. 32), the figure of the grace of life which is to be the reward of "him that overcometh" (Rev. ii. 17), was to be subject to certain regulations designed to recall great spiritual truths and duties which the people were prone to forget. These regulations were solemnly published to the wondering

congregation by their great leader. The Israelite was to gather his portion day by day in sufficient measure for himself and his house, and nothing beyond that. If more was gathered and kept beyond its day, it was found corrupt in the morning. On each of the first six days of the week it was thus to be gathered, but not on the seventh. Instead of being found on the field on the last day of the week, it was to be provided and gathered in double measure on the sixth day. One half of this twofold supply was to be kept and prepared against the seventh day, so that on that day it did not become corrupt. When the double quantity came to the people's hand on the sixth day, the rulers of the congregation reported the fact to Moses, and the explanation was then given. The leader of Israel recognised and proclaimed the fact that it was the Divine purpose that the seventh day should be "a solemn rest, a holy sabbath unto the Lord" (R.V.). It is added that certain Israelites, disregarding the word of Moses on the appointment of the seventh day as a Sabbath to the Lord, or failing to understand it, went forth to gather on that day as on other days. But they failed to find the manna. That event occasioned the repetition of the law in the more definite form, that every man was to "abide in his place," and none to go out of the camp on that sacred day. The people understood, and gave heed, and "rested on the seventh day." So they were prepared for the solemn promulgation of the Sabbath law from Sinai. This narrative has been understood by many to imply that the seventh day was already known as a day separated from the other days of the

week, and dedicated to rest. The opposite conclusion is drawn by others from the surprise which the rulers are thought to indicate in their report to Moses of the double supply on the Sabbath day. In any case this event prepared the people for the place which was to be given to the seventh day in the Decalogue, and for the subsequent laws which were to protect it and regulate its observance.

19. THE SABBATH-LAW AT SINAI (Exodus xx.).—Leaving Rephidim, the “threshold of Sinai,” the scene of their first victory, the place where they tarried long, the Hebrew host, under the sense of Divine guidance and in mysterious expectation, had resumed their march. Through deep valley and stupendous pass they had penetrated into a territory familiar to their great leader by his stay with Jethro. At last they stood in the sanctuary of the desert, fit scene for a revelation of God, with the heights of Sinai, “the Mount of God,” on the south, and the rocky wall of Horeb on the north. Here, in the heart of the mighty mountains, on the memorable plain which the traveller describes as “large enough to give ample space for the tents of more than two million souls,” these Hebrews, whose history had been so strange and was to become still stranger as the centuries wore on, came into a new covenant with the God of their redemption. For three days solemn preparation was made, the people waiting in strained anticipation and awe-struck suspense. Then “the earth shook and trembled” (Ps. xviii. 7), the “heavens also dropped,” “Sinai itself *was moved* at the presence of God” (Ps. lxxviii. 8), “the hills melted like wax” (Ps. xcvi. 5), and through the dread

phenomena of the storm and blackness, the lightnings and thunders of the desert, the invisible God, the God of Israel and the whole earth, made His majesty felt and His mind known. The Ten Words were proclaimed, which were to be the basis of a solemn engagement between God and Israel, and the witness to His will regarding His people's life and duty; to which, for that reason, the Old Testament gives such names as these—"His covenant" (Deut. iv. 13), "the words of the covenant" (Exod. xxxiv. 28), "the tables of the covenant" (Deut. ix. 9), the "two tables of the testimony" (Exod. xxxi. 18). In these Ten Words were laid the foundations of all piety and probity, and among the great principles which they embodied on the acknowledgment of one God, His spiritual worship, the honour of parents, the respect due to life, purity, truth, and unselfishness, a central place was given to the remembrance of the Sabbath. The Ten Words thus published were not for the moment only, nor for a single people. The spoken word was committed to the keeping of the two tables of stone, and these to the custody of the Ark. After many wanderings and changes of fortune, the Ark was deposited at last in the new Temple which Solomon built for the glory of God, and being opened, was found to contain "the two tables of stone which Moses put there at Horeb, when the Lord made a covenant with the children of Israel" (1 Kings viii. 9), and nothing but these. The sacred Ark and the granite slabs of Sinai which seemed defiant of time, have perished. But the Ten Words live in the conscience of all civilised races, and continue to speak as the Christian law of duty, with

the new honour put upon them and the new significance given them by Christ. And with them and in their heart lives the law of Sacred Rest.

20. THE TERMS OF THE SABBATH-LAW IN EXODUS (ch. xx. 8-11).—In the Pentateuch the Ten Words appear in two forms, in one form in the twentieth chapter of Exodus, and in another in the fifth chapter of Deuteronomy. These are not precisely alike in every point, and their characteristic differences are of interest. In this second book of the Pentateuch the Sabbath law is stated in terms which deserve our careful study. It differs in form from the other laws. The first three and the last five take the negative or prohibitive form—"Thou shalt not." The fourth, like the fifth, is expressed positively. It is introduced by a word which appears in none of the rest. This word, "Remember," might recall an institute of former times which had been allowed to slip out of memory and regard, or was in peril of that. But here it has rather the general sense, already referred to, of *keeping in mind* or *giving attention to*. For in the other version of the Ten Commandments it is represented by the simple phrase, "*Keep* the Sabbath day" (Deut. v. 12). It speaks to us in either case of the danger of forgetting or neglecting it. The Sabbath was thus to be remembered, as the terms of the law further state, with a view to "keep it holy," or to "sanctify it," as it is rendered in Deuteronomy v. 12. This expression, which means properly to "set apart," declares it to be the Divine intention that the day should be *separated* from the common uses of other days, as the Hebrew people themselves were to be a people elect and apart from

others. And the particular day to which such peculiar honour was to belong was not left to the Israelite's own choice, so that he might set apart the first or second or any other of his own preference. It was chosen for him, and was to be the seventh in the order of days. Its *separation* was to express itself in the cessation of ordinary work. Six days were to be free to the Israelite, in which to take up man's burden of honest toil and engage in common things with a good conscience. But the seventh day was to detach him from all servile or wearing toil, and restrain him from all common, secular, selfish work. This discharge from labour is given in detail. It was to extend not only to the head of the house himself, but to the members of his family, both sons and daughters ; and not to the master only, but to those who toiled for him, whether men-servants or the still more dependent maid-servants. To these classes the law meant on the one hand the same obligation to honour the Sabbath as bound the responsible head of the house, and on the other hand the same blessing of release from toil as came to him. Nor was the benignant sweep of the institution limited even to these. It was to be the protection of the "cattle," so apt to become the dumb victims of man's thoughtlessness or mercilessness. And it was to take within its shelter, as well as pledge to its observance, another class, destitute of the natural rights of the born Israelite and peculiarly in need of consideration—"thy stranger that is within thy gates" ; in other words, foreigners who had become resident in the Hebrew communities. And this great law of the Sabbath-rest,

with all the duties which it enjoined, and the rights which it secured, is stated to have its reason in the example of God the Creator. The Divine rest following the Divine Creation; the Divine regard and blessing stamped upon the day by the Maker of all things when He continued His creative work through six days and ceased from it on the seventh,—these were to be at once the motive and the model for the observance of the Sabbath.

21. THE TERMS OF THE SABBATH-LAW IN DEUTERONOMY (ch. v. 12-15).—The edition of the Fourth Commandment which is given in Deuteronomy is substantially the same as that in Exodus. In certain things, however, it varies the statement, and these things have their own purpose and interest. There are two minor points of difference in the opening sentences. It expresses the Divine injunction by the term “keep,” instead of “remember,” and it adds the words, “as the Lord thy God hath commanded thee” (v. 12). But its chief peculiarity is the larger expression which it gives to the beneficent intention of the institution. It makes special provision again for the “stranger within the gates,” having careful regard for the risks and disadvantages of this class. These naturalised aliens, people of other races who had become domiciled in the land, came to be a very numerous body. Their ranks were recruited from several sources—from the “mixed multitude” that went up with Israel out of Egypt, from the old population of Canaan, from captives taken in war, from hired servants and traders. In Solomon’s time they numbered 153,600 males (2 Chr. ii. 17). Those of them who were

bondmen were circumcised ; those who were free might or might not be so. But all were bound to observe the great laws of Israel's religion, and all were secured in important rights under the Mosaic ordinances. Such a class needed protection against the temptation, so natural to the native, to treat the alien with contempt or harshness. The Mosaic law, therefore, required of the Israelite that he should treat the "stranger" as a brother (Lev. xix. 34 ; Deut. x. 19). In a liberal spirit, unlike that of other nations, it cared for his poverty, providing for him as for the poor man, the fatherless, and the widow ; making him free of the joy of the religious festivals (Deut. xvi. 11, 14 ; xxvi. 11) ; giving him to share in the gleaning of cornfield, vineyard, and olive-yard (Lev. xix. 10 ; xxiii. 22 ; Deut. xxiv. 20), in the triennial tithe, the forgotten sheaf, the produce of the soil in the Sabbatical year (Deut. xiv. 28, 29 ; xxiv. 19 ; Lev. xxv. 6). But here we get a more specific assertion of the interest both of the brute creation and of the servant in the benefits of the law. Where the version of Exodus says generally "nor thy cattle," we have here the more particular statement "nor thine ox, nor thine ass, nor any of thy cattle," so that neither draught beast, nor beast of burden, nor any brute creature ministering to man's toil or need, should be denied its sacred privilege of rest. And the claims of the *servant* are affirmed in terms remarkable at once for their precision and for the touch of feeling which softens them.

22. THE NOTE OF BENEFICENCE IN THE DEUTERONOMIC LAW.—It is in the case of the *servant* that the peculiar beneficence of the Sabbath



law as given in Deuteronomy most appears. Slavery was the normal condition of the Hebrew "servant," and to *work* was the slave's lot. The number of such "servants" was large, and they were drawn from different sources. Native Hebrews might be reduced to the servile position to a limited extent and in special circumstances by paternal authority (Exod. xxi. 7); more generally through poverty, or through offences against property. A man guilty of theft and unable to make restitution, was punishable by loss of his liberty. A poor man might sell himself for a maintenance into servitude. Captives in war, purchases from foreign dealers, resident aliens sunk in poverty or crime, made a large class of non-Hebrew slaves. The position of these "servants" was better far in Israel than in many other nations. They were kindly and justly treated as a whole, and had important rights and privileges. But they remained the "possession" of their masters, their owners' "money" (Lev. xxv. 45, 46; Exod. xxi: 21). Their life was one of toil, and the female slave had greater restrictions and burdens to bear than the male. They had peculiar need of the protection of the Law, especially against the misery of incessant, grinding toil. Their case, therefore, found its sacred place in the heart of the Ten Words, and peculiar regard is given it in the Deuteronomic statement. Words are added, "that thy manservant and thy maid-servant may rest as well as thou," which set the slave's right of rest on the same level with the master's. And in sympathy with the same beneficent anxiety for the rights of those large classes who were in bonds to toil, a different

reason is here assigned for the observance of the Sabbath. The statute is made to have its ground not in the Divine Creative Rest, but in the Divine deliverance from Egypt. This, though in no sense inconsistent with the former, is a distinct ground or motive, kindling the pathetic memories of the past, and enriching the institution with the grateful recollections of the rest from servile toil which was won for them by the mighty hand of a redeeming God. In the freedom and fulness of the Land of Promise the Israelite was to remember what he himself had been in the strange country of the oppressor and slave-driver. Recalling the years of his grinding, unresting toil beneath the lash of the taskmaster and the killing heats of Egypt, he was to see a brother in the "servant" who did his work in the land of his inheritance. The Sabbath was to be a memorial of the Divine event which made him free, a weekly appeal to his sympathy and consideration for those in bonds, a perpetual witness to the equality of all such with himself in the sight of God in the benign right of rest.

23. THE IDEA OF THE SABBATH IN THE TEN WORDS.—The central idea of the Sabbath, therefore, as it stands in the Decalogue, is that of *rest*, in the sense of the intermission of ordinary work on the part of all, whether bond or free; and especially in the gracious sense of the beneficent right of relief from wearing toil on the part of the dumb cattle and the helpless slave. It was a provision against the selfishness of man in the labour to which he gave himself, and in that which he exacted of others. It was a witness to the relations

in which the people stood to the God of Creation and the God of Redemption. So it set before them the Divine idea of their life—a life neither of idleness nor of drudgery, a life not wholly common and secular, but one of honest toil and periodic rest. But, while discharge from toil is the central thing in it, and the beneficent security for the rights of the dependent is so largely expressed, these are neither the only nor the primary interests. The first thing in it is its sacred meaning and intention. The institutions and festivals of Israel were all religious ordinances, and the rest was to be a rest “to the Lord.” The note of what the Sabbath was primarily to be is given at once in the opening words of the Commandment in both its versions. The object of the remembrance of the day was to “keep it holy,” or to “sanctify it” by giving it a place apart from other days, and by consecrating it to other uses than theirs. “It was in harmony,” as is rightly observed, “with the whole system of Judaism, and was a most characteristic expression of one of the great ideas of which Judaism was the development. A nation was ‘set apart’ from all other nations, was invested with special prerogatives and entrusted with special duties. Within that elect nation itself a tribe—the tribe of Levi—was ‘set apart’ from all the other tribes, and similarly distinguished; in that sacred tribe a priestly family—the family of Aaron—was ‘set apart’ from all other families; in that family of priests an individual—the High Priest—was ‘set apart’ from all other priests, and in him this idea of personal consecration to God was represented in its higher form. A sacred building—the

Temple—was ‘set apart’ from all other buildings as being God’s dwelling-place ; the inner court was ‘set apart’ from the rest of the Temple as being especially God’s house ; and in that inner court the Holy of Holies was ‘set apart’ from the holy place itself as the very chamber of the Divine Presence.” So while God was to be honoured by a proper use of every day, one particular day was to be an elect and peculiar day, “set apart” as specially and wholly His. Thus it embodied the great principle that our time is not our own, but something received from God, and to be consecrated to Him. As a religious institution it also looked to duties of worship and provided opportunities for worship, which found expression in particular ordinances of the Mosaic Law.

24. PECULIARITY OF THE SABBATH AS A MOSAIC INSTITUTION.—The broad terms in which it is promulgated in the Decalogue, therefore, show the Sabbath to be the embodiment of certain primary ideas of moral and religious moment. These ideas mark it out as a thing which stands alone among all the religious institutions of early date. Its prescriptions on labour and rest ; its benign anxiety to secure rights for the dependent and helpless ; the conception of life which it put before the Hebrew people ; the religious character attaching to it as an ordinance consecrated to the one living God, the God of Creation and the God of Redemption, these things and others which appear in subsequent and more detailed statements of the Sabbath law, combine to give it a wholly peculiar place in the religious ordinances and observances of the old world. That

this institution of Israel was without any real parallel among other ancient nations, is confessed by those who have studied it most profoundly. One of the greatest writers on the history of Israel whom our century has produced speaks of it thus: "What Moses made of the last day of the week was something quite new, something which had previously existed among no nation and in no religion. The last day was to be devoted to rest; all ordinary human toil was to cease, an unwonted rest was to reign. Man must therefore renounce the gain and enjoyment which he sought in his ordinary occupation and labours. This is the self-denying sacrifice which he must here offer, something quite different from all the sacrifices which the world had ever known before, but one which is often far from easy for man to make, seeing how covetous he is, or otherwise plunged in the world's unrest and turmoil. But yet man shall not rest on this day for his own sake alone, so as to sink into a vacant condition, characterised only by the absence of activity, or yield himself up to dissolute, savage pleasures, for the sake of passing the time. The rest, says the Law from the very first, shall be unto the Lord Jehovah, shall belong to Him and be sanctified to Him. Man, then, shall release his soul and body from all their burdens, with all the professions and pursuits of ordinary life, only in order to gather himself together again to God with greater purity and fewer disturbing elements, and renew in him the might of his own better powers. If, then, the interchange of activity and rest is already founded in the nature of all creation, and is the more beneficial and health-bringing the more regular

its occurrence, so should it be found here too ; yet not as when in the night and in sleep the body is cared for, but as when, in a joyous day of unfettered meditation, the spiritual man already finds his true rest, and thereby is indeed renewed and strengthened."—(Ewald).

**25. THE SABBATH AND THE SABBATICAL CYCLE.** — The Sabbath, with its peculiar significance, however, did not stand alone in the Mosaic institutions. It belonged to a remarkable Sabbatical scale or cycle, in which it held the first and fundamental place. The different parts of this cycle have the same general purpose and the same distinctive character. The scale, which starts with the seventh day, embraces the seventh month, the seventh year, and the seven weeks of years. These periodical times are also sacred times. They illustrate each other, and throw into stronger relief the idea which they have in common. The Sabbath, which is the basis and keynote of the entire series, has its own meaning further illumined when it is studied alongside the other members of the sacred scale.

**26. THE SACRED OR SABBATICAL MONTH** (Lev. xvi. 29-34 ; xxiii. 23-44 ; Num. xxix. 1-12).— Among the months of the Jewish year a peculiar position belonged to the seventh. It included three institutions of great importance—the Feast of Trumpets, the Day of Atonement, and the Feast of Tabernacles. Each of these had its sacred significance, and the month within which they fell was the holy Sabbatical month. It opened with the Feast of Trumpets, which appears to have been the Festival of the Jewish New Year's Day, this seventh

month, *Tisri* by name, being the first month in the Jewish civil year. It differed in several things from the ordinary festivals. It is described as "a sabbath, a memorial of blowing of trumpets" (Lev. xxiii. 24); "a day of blowing the trumpets" (Num. xxix. 1). It was forbidden to do any servile work on it; it was one of the days of "holy convocation," and special offerings were made on it, consisting of a young bullock, a ram, and seven lambs of the first year, together with the usual meal-offerings, and a kid as a sin-offering (Lev. xxiii. 24, 25; Num. xxix. 1-11). Again, the tenth day of this month was the Day of Atonement, the day on which the High Priest, clothed in white linen, offered atonement for sin—for objects and for persons, for the sanctuary itself, the tent of meeting and the altar, for the priesthood, and for the whole congregation of Israel (Lev. xvi. 16). This day was remarkable for the peculiar solemnity of its ritual, especially for the casting of the lots upon two goats presented before the Lord at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation; the killing of the one goat and the sprinkling of its blood; the confessing of the people's sins over the other goat, and its dismissal into the wilderness (Lev. xvi. 7-22). It was therefore a day of holy convocation and of rest from all kinds of labour (Lev. xxiii. 27-29). It was also a day of fasting, on which the Israelite was to afflict his soul, on penalty of being "cut off from among his people" (Lev. xxiii. 29). Then on the fifteenth day of this same month began the festival, which is called "the Feast" in the New Testament (John vii. 37), the Feast of Tabernacles

(Lev. xxiii. 34), or of Ingathering (Exod. xxiii. 14-16). It recalled the time when the emancipated people sojourned in the wilderness. Hence the remarkable practice of going forth during its continuance to dwell in booths made of the boughs of trees (Lev. xxiii. 40-43). It celebrated also the completion of the reaping of the fruits of the year, and was thus the most joyous of all the Jewish festivals, and more sacrifices were prescribed on it than on others. It lasted seven days; its first day was a day of holy convocation, and it was followed by a solemn assembly or holy convocation on the eighth day (Lev. xxiii. 36). So this seventh month was pervaded by the Sabbatical idea. Its first day was "a sabbath," a day "of holy convocation" (Lev. xxiii. 23, 24; Num. xxix. 1), on which no servile work could be done. Its tenth day was "a day of holy convocation" and "a sabbath of rest" (Lev. xviii. 27, 32; Numb. xxix. 7); and the same sacred Sabbatical character belonged to its fifteenth day and to the day following the seven days' period of the glad-some feast of Ingathering (Lev. xxiii. 34, 36; Num. xxix. 35).

27. THE SABBATICAL YEAR (Exod. xxiii. 9-12; Lev. xxv. 1-7; Deut. xv. 1-3).—As among the months so among the years, the seventh had a sacred Sabbatical position. Its peculiar character is seen so far in certain provisions which were made on behalf of bond-servants. Among the many humane "judgments" which the law set before the people was one which provided that a Hebrew servant who had been bought should serve only six years, and "go out free for nothing" in the seventh;



that the wife of one who was married when he became a bondman should go out with him ; and that the Hebrew servant, whether man or woman, should not go out empty, but liberally furnished out of the master's flock and floor and winepress (Exod. xxi. 1-5 ; Deut. xv. 12-15). But this consecrated character of the seventh month is seen more definitely in the ordinances given in the twenty-third chapter of Exodus and the twenty-fifth of Leviticus, which provide that the land itself shall have its Sabbath. In the former chapter it is prescribed that, while the land shall be sown and its fruits reaped for six years, it shall "rest and lie still" on the seventh, and that the same shall be the case with the vineyard and the olive-yard. In this passage the ordinance of the Sabbatical year is also connected immediately with the law of the Sabbath-day (v. 12), and its humane intention is stated in the most distinct terms. It is preceded by words charging Israel with the great duties of justice and consideration in their dealings with the stranger, because their own experience of Egypt made them "Know the heart of a stranger" (v. 9) ; and its intention is declared to be that the poor of the people may eat and the beasts of the field after them (v. 11). In the second passage it is provided that the usual sowing, pruning, and reaping shall be intermitted every seventh year ; that on that year there shall be no ingathering of harvests for the owner's individual behoof ; but that the natural increase of the untilled soil shall be the common support of master and servant, freeman and bondman, Hebrew and stranger, cattle and beast alike. In Deuteronomy the

law of rest for the land is not re-stated, but a special ordinance in the interest of debtors is given, which is in harmony with it and was probably related to it. At the end of every seven years there was to be a *release*, "the Lord's release," as it is called, the full benefit of which was to be enjoyed by the poor debtor who was a native Israelite, though not by the foreigner who, not being bound by all that bound the Hebrew, would not have a claim to all the corresponding remissions. This law of "release" held good, in all probability, not in perpetuity but only for the year. As the land had its rest for the year, so the poor debtor had rest for the year from the pressure of his debt, no interest being exacted of him and no proceedings being taken against him. Like the laws of the triennial tithe (Deut. xiv. 28, 29) and the law of manumission (Deut. xv. 12-18), this law of the Year of Release was a witness to the humane consideration for the necessitous and the burdened which made the Jewish legislation so different from the legislations of many other ancient nations. In the institution of the Sabbatical year this consideration for the rights and needs of fellow-men is so distinctive a feature, that it might seem to be a purely moral ordinance, not a religious. Everything in it, however, is finally referred to God. Even the release for debt is "the Lord's release"; and the whole provisions of the Sabbatical year taught the Hebrew that his land was not his own, as the provisions of the Sabbath day taught him that his time was not his own.

28. THE JUBILEE YEAR (Lev. xxv. 8-16, 23-55; xxvii. 16-25).—The Sabbatical system was crowned

by the year of Jubilee. The origin of this memorable word *Jubilee* is not quite certain, but it most probably comes from a Hebrew word meaning either a *long-drawn sound*, or the instrument by which such a sound was produced. It has been questioned also whether the Jubilee year was the forty-ninth year or the fiftieth. Some have felt it difficult to suppose that the land could support the people two years running without tillage, and have concluded in favour of the forty-ninth year. But the statements in Leviticus xxv. 8, 10, 11, clearly indicate it to have been the intention of the law that after the completion of seven Sabbaths of years there should come a special year of rest. It is to the book of Leviticus that we owe our knowledge of the institution and the objects which it was meant to serve. No account of it is given either in Exodus or in Deuteronomy; and the only other statement about it which occurs in the Pentateuch is in connection with the appeal to Moses to make provision that the inheritance which had been given to the daughters of Zelophehad should not pass away from Manasseh, the tribe of the family of their father (Num. xxxvi. 4). In the Prophets, however, there are passages which appear to refer more or less distinctly to the Jubilee, such as Isaiah lxi. 1, 2. The entrance of the year of Jubilee was notified by blasts of trumpets, probably curved horns, blown throughout the land, proclaiming liberty to all the people. This took place on the tenth day of the seventh month, the day of Atonement. It is not stated by whom or at what point of the day these trumpets were blown. But in all probability this service would be per-

formed by the priests ; for it was their function to make similar announcements on other public occasions (Num. x. 8). It is also reasonable to suppose that the whole ceremonial of this solemn day would be completed by the High Priest before the Jubilee was inaugurated. If this was the case then "the contrast between the quiet of the day and the loud blast of the trumpets at its close must," as is rightly observed, "have rendered deeply impressive the hallowing of the year of release from poverty and bondage" (S. Clark). It must have made the gladness of the time and the great idea associated with the institution, come home with peculiar force to the mind of the Israelite.

29. **THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE JUBILEE.**—The Jubilee Year was to be a time of liberty and joy. This was indicated by three benign provisions. In the first place, the year was to be hallowed by the "return of every man unto his possession and . . . unto his family." The possession originally assigned to the family to which any Israelite belonged, if it had passed away from his house, was to be given back ; houses in walled cities, however, being exempted from this law as not being connected with the tillage of the soil (Lev. xxv. 30). In order to give further security against oppression or injustice in this great interest of the retention of landed patrimony, laws were made which strictly regulated the sales which became necessary when an Israelite was driven to part with his property, and also adjusted the price according to the period that would elapse ere the Jubilee came round. In the second place, as in the

case of the Sabbatical year, the Jubilee year was to be a time of rest for the land itself. The soil was to be exempt from the usual ploughing, sowing, and reaping, and men were to subsist on the spontaneous increase of the earth. In the third place, it was to bring manumission to the slave. If an Israelite had become a bondman to any one, whether a fellow-Israelite or a resident foreigner, the Jubilee year was to set him free from the yoke, so that, if the Jubilee intervened before the seventh year, which also emancipated him, he might at once return to liberty. The only thing which could interfere with this right was the voluntary renunciation of it by the man himself. If an Israelite who, by reason of poverty, had sold himself into bondage to another Israelite, preferred to continue in his servitude when the time came, either by recurrence of the seventh year, or by the advent of the Jubilee, to recover his freedom, he had to make that clear by a formal and significant act. He had to come before the judges, and allow his master to bring him to the door, and bore his ear through with an awl, fixing it to the door-post in token of his permanent attachment to the service of the house. One who thus voluntarily gave up his right no doubt retained the privilege secured to every Israelite who became bondman to another Israelite. He was not to be set to slave-labour, but to the work of a day-labourer and sojourner (Lev. xxv. 36-39). And nothing short of this public act of voluntary renunciation could come in the way of his emancipation at the Jubilee. So in Exodus it is provided that the man who goes through this cere-

mony shall serve his master "for ever" (xxi. 6); while in Leviticus, where the privileges of the Jubilee year are dealt with at length, it is stated that the brother who has sold himself shall serve with his master "until the Jubilee" and then "go out" and "return unto his own family" (xxv. 39, 41).

### 30. MEANING OF THE SABBATICAL CYCLE.

—The great ideas of *rest* and *restoration*, therefore, were expressed by the Sabbatical cycle, the Sabbath itself forming the basis of all. The seventh day and the seventh month spoke of the rights of the Israelite, and the recovery of those rights where they had been alienated for a time. The seventh year and the fiftieth spoke also of the rest of the land and the restoration of the Israelite's patrimony in it. The Jubilee year specially embodied the great idea of *restitution*, the return of the community or society of Israel to the Divine order. "God, who once redeemed His people from Egypt's bondage, appears here again as their Redeemer, by not only giving liberty to the slave, but also providing for the poor a certain portion of the heritage of His people, since there were to be no poor among the covenant people. To bring about such a year of grace, sins had to be forgiven; therefore, the year of Jubilee was proclaimed on the Day of Atonement" (Ehler). These Sabbatical times were all humane institutions, providing for the rest of the toiler, the maintenance of the poor, the freedom of the enslaved. They put a check upon the selfishness of man, upon the inordinate amassing of wealth, the appropriation of the land by the few, and all that interfered with the rights of the people and a healthy

social order. They were also religious institutions, teaching the great principles of Israel's dependence on God and the Divine idea of what Israel was designed to be to God. They meant that the Israelite held all of God and was to honour God in all, that both his time and his land were to be recognised as God's, and that he himself was God's possession and servant. So when the Levitical Law ordains the restoration of the patrimony of Israelites, it gives this as the reason for the assertion of that right, "The land shall not be sold for ever : for the land is Mine, for ye are strangers and sojourners with Me" (Lev. xxv. 23). . And when it speaks of the recovery of their liberty by bond Hebrews, it founds the privilege on the fact that they are God's servants and His only, "For they are My servants which I brought forth out of the land of Egypt." "For unto Me the children of Israel are servants, whom I brought forth out of the land of Egypt" (Lev. xxv. 42, 55).

**31. THE INTERPRETATION AND APPLICATION OF THE SABBATH-LAW.** — The Fourth Commandment contents itself with stating the great principle of the Sabbath-law. In other sections of the Pentateuch we find enactments defining the application of the law and regulating the observance of the institution. As it stands in the Decalogue itself, the principle of the law is the broad principle of rest from work ; and the terms in which it is expressed show that by this was meant not merely release from servile labour, but cessation of all kinds of work and business. In the Decalogue itself, as we have seen, the religious char-

acter of the institution is also recognised. The seventh day is the Sabbath *of the Lord*; it is blessed and hallowed by the Lord; it is the Lord who commands it to be kept. But, as in the case of all laws, questions would arise regarding its application to particular cases, and the way in which it was to be carried out both in its negative aspect of a prohibition of work and in its positive aspect of a religious institution. The Decalogue itself, in promulgating the principles, does not concern itself with the answers to be given in detail to such questions. But other statements and enactments in the Pentateuch indicate how much was to be understood to be embraced within the prohibition of work, what limitations were applicable to it, how it was to be enforced, and in what way the Sabbath-law was to be observed both in its negative aspect and in its positive. The other historical books of the Old Testament, and the writings of the prophets, give us further light on some of these matters, and also show us how the law was regarded from time to time, the abuses into which it fell, and the steps taken to rectify these and to restore the institution to its proper honour.

32. NEGATIVE REGULATIONS AND ENACTMENTS : LIBERTY OF MOVEMENT (Exod. xvi. 29).—In the Pentateuch we find three passages, all in the second book, dealing with the negative or prohibitive aspect of the legislation. One of these provides that on the Day of Rest the Israelite shall remain in quiet in his own dwelling. “Abide ye every man,” Moses is reported to have said, “in his own place, let no man go out of



his place on the seventh day" (Exod xvi. 29). This injunction belongs to the history of the first descent of the Manna. It was meant to put a check on the inclination to leave the camp as on other days, in quest of the heaven-given food. It is to be understood in the light of its immediate purpose. But the later Jews, forgetting its historical occasion and missing its spirit, turned it to strange uses. An extreme sect, putting a perversely literal sense upon it, took it to mean that no one was at liberty, during the length of the Sabbath day, to change the position in which he chanced to be when the sixth day ended. On the basis of this injunction it also came to be prescribed that no Jew was at liberty to move more than 2000 cubits (about 6 furlongs) from the place of his abode. This was called the "Sabbath limit." It is the "sabbath-day's journey" which is mentioned in the opening chapter of the Book of Acts, in the narrative of the return of the disciples to Jerusalem after the sight of their Lord's ascension from "the mount which is called Olivet" (Acts i. 12). This estimate of the length of walk or journey permitted on the Sabbath is supposed to have been made on the analogy of the space which was to intervene between the Ark and the people, according to the statement in the Book of Joshua (iii. 4). But the misapplied ingenuity of the Rabbis found a way of relief from this inconvenient restriction on the liberty of movement. They devised an expedient which was known as "the connection of boundaries." This meant that if one wished to go more than 2000 cubits from

home on the seventh day, he had only to place food sufficient for two meals at some point within the legal limit before the Sabbath began. The food thus deposited was held to mark the spot as one which the man designated for his dwelling-place for the time, and he was then deemed to be free to walk not only the distance between his actual home and the place so marked, but 2000 cubits beyond that.

33. **NEGATIVE ENACTMENTS: THE PENAL LAW** (Exod. xxxi. 12-17).—A considerable section of the Book of Exodus (ch. xxv. 1.—xxxi. 11) is occupied with the directions for the making of the Ark and the Tabernacle, the separation and consecration of Aaron to the priesthood, and the construction of the altar of burnt-offering and the altar of incense. The giving of these directions is followed in the narrative of Exodus by a solemn restatement of the Sabbath-law, its sanctity, its peculiar meaning, and the penalty for any breach of it. It is proclaimed specially as a “sign” between God and Israel, a sign giving the people to know that the Lord sanctified them and set them apart and claimed them for His own, a sign of “a perpetual covenant” between them and Him, and, therefore, a thing to be observed “throughout their generations” (Exod. xxxi. 16). Its sanctity and its binding obligation, as thus enforced, lay in its being a token of the relation of grace in which Israel stood, the covenant - relation into which God entered with them and they with Him. To break the Sabbath, therefore, was to break the covenant. The man who dishonoured the law by working on the seventh

day was to "be cut off from among his people" (xxxii. 14). He put himself outside the pale of the covenant. He became an outlaw, and the outlaw forfeited all rights. The fact that this re-assertion of the holiness of the Sabbath and this declaration that the violation of it constituted a capital offence, are introduced at the close of the instructions for the building of the Tabernacle, has led many to conclude that the immediate object was to guard Israel against the supposition that they might be less scrupulous in their observance of the Sabbath law when engaged in so holy a work as that. However that may be, the penalty attached to a breach of the law in this matter had its deepest and most permanent reason in the relation in which the Sabbath stood to the covenant between God and Israel, and in its significance as a token of the allegiance of the people to their Divine king. Every religion has some usages in which it seeks to express "its entire significance and spirit, as well as its external validity and sanctity" (Ewald). These rites keep the religion, its beliefs, its laws, its essential meaning, before the minds of its adherents. They become "the seal of the public conscience," as they have been appropriately called; and consequently a peculiar sacredness belongs to them. The religion of Israel had such sacramental rites in the institution of *circumcision*, which was the token of entrance into the Church and Community, and in the annual celebration of the *Passover*. But the Sabbath was in a very special sense, and from the beginning of Israel's national existence, a sacrament of Israel's religion, a token

of God's grace to His people and of the people's obligation to Him. The protection of the Sabbath was the protection of the religion. The dishonour of the Sabbath was the dishonour of the religion as such. Hence, as was the case also with the sin of blaspheming the name of God, the deliberate breach of the Sabbath had all the significance of a capital offence against the community of Israel and the God of Israel.

34. **NEGATIVE ENACTMENTS: THE CASE OF FIRES** (Exod. xxxv. 1-3).—The account of the directions for the construction of the Tabernacle in the Book of Exodus is interrupted by the report of the idolatry of the people during the absence of Moses on the Mount, the breaking of the Tables of Stone, the intercession of Moses, the renewal of the Tables, and the descent of the Lawgiver from Sinai with the glory shining on his face (Exod. xxxii.-xxxiv.). The report of the instructions for the erection of the sanctuary is then taken up anew, and is prefaced by another statement of the sanctity of the seventh day, the ordinance of rest, and the penalty of death for a trespass of the law by work. To this is added the command that no fire should be kindled throughout the habitations of Israel on the Day of Rest. This interpretation of the general principle of cessation of work is implied in the direction given in the case of the Manna, that the baking and seething of food which was intended for the seventh day should be done on the sixth day. Here it is delivered in express terms, and in the hearing of the whole people gathered in special assembly. It does not appear

that this prohibition held good for other sacred days. In the case of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, for example, while common secular work was forbidden, it was permitted to do any kind of work necessary for the preparation of food. "No manner of work" was to be done on the first day or the seventh of that feast, "save that which every man must eat, that only may be done of you" (Exod. xii. 16). But in the case of the Sabbath the use of fire was forbidden even for cooking purposes. Nothing is said of the application of this enactment to the rites of worship. These were exempted. The fire on the altar was to be kept perpetually burning, and was to be fed with wood every morning (Lev. vi. 12). This law of the disuse of fire on the Sabbath-day was also made the subject of many curious and confusing interpretations by the later Jews, which have no place in the Mosaic books themselves. Thus it was taught that no one was at liberty to read with a light on the eve of the Sabbath; that if a Gentile lighted a lamp for a Jew, the Jew could not use it, but that if a Gentile lighted it without any view to the Jew's need, the Jew might use it; that food, which it was desired to eat hot on the Sabbath, and which had been baked or boiled the day before, might be kept hot by being put into substances like clothes, fruits, pigeons' feathers, or the tow of flax, which simply maintained its heat, but not into things like salt, chalk, sand, or damp vegetables, which would increase the heat and so amount to the same as the lighting of a fire.

### 35. THE CASE OF THE SABBATH-BREAKER

**IN THE WILDERNESS** (Num. xv. 32-36).—The Book of Numbers furnishes one notable instance of the punishment of high-handed transgression of the Sabbath-law. The narrative which that book gives of the murmurings of the people when the spies gave their account of the strength of the Canaanitish tribes, is followed by a report of the issue of various regulations respecting offerings. Among these are certain ordinances dealing with the distinction between sins of ignorance and sins of presumption, prescribing an atonement for the former, and declaring that the man guilty of the latter was to bear the penalty “of being cut off from among his people” (xv. 27-31). It is in this connection that the story of the Sabbath-breaker is introduced. It appears to be brought in at this point, therefore, as an instance of a presumptuous or high-handed violation of the law, a thing done wilfully, and in a spirit of bravado or defiance. The name of the offender is not given, neither is there any more definite statement of time and place, than that the event occurred sometime during the forty years when the people were in the wilderness. The offence itself is described as that of gathering “sticks,” the word being that which is used of the “wood” which Abraham clave for the burnt-offering (Gen. xxii. 3, 9), of the “wood” which the sons of Aaron were to put upon the fire on the altar (Lev. i. 7), and of the timber employed for the making of the Ark (Exod. xxv. 10). Those who came upon the man thus engaged in open transgression of the law, brought him before Moses and Aaron and the congregation for judgment. He was put in ward for a time,

until his case had adequate consideration. The penalty of death was attached by the law to the offence in question (Exod. xxxi. 14 ; xxxv. 2). The reason for the delay may have been that the particular *method* of death had not yet been determined, or it may have been the propriety of considering whether the offence reported was one lacking all mitigating circumstances, and deserving the utmost penalty of the law. The result was that the offender was condemned to death by stoning, which was the ordinary Jewish method of executing capital sentences in the case of idolatry, blasphemy, and the gravest moral offences (Lev. xx. 2 ; Deut. xiii. 6, 10 ; Lev. xxiv. 14, 16, 23 ; Deut. xxi. 18-21). This defiant transgressor of the Sabbath-law, therefore, was dealt with precisely as the unnamed son of Shelomith was dealt with, who "blasphemed the name of the Lord, and cursed" (Lev. xxiv. 10-16). The narrative shows how the sanctity of the Sabbath-law had established itself in the consciousness of the people.

36. POSITIVE ENACTMENTS FOR THE OBSERVANCE OF THE SABBATH; THE HOLY CONVOCATION (Lev. xxiii. 3, 24, 33-38).— Besides these negative prescriptions which took the form of explanations and applications of the general principle of abstention from work, we find in the Mosaic books certain positive statements and regulations providing for the proper observance of the day, and exhibiting its fundamentally religious meaning. One of these is the declaration that it is to be a day of "holy convocation." This expression, "holy convocation," is confined almost

wholly to the Pentateuch, occurring elsewhere only in Isaiah (i. 13 ; iv. 5,) where our English Bible renders it "assembly." No explanation of it is given in set terms, but it seems to designate a gathering for religious purposes as distinguished from ordinary meetings of the people. Certain days of the great festivals were days of holy convocation. The first day and the last day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the first day of the Feast of Tabernacles, the day following that Feast, the Day of Pentecost, the Day of Atonement, and the Feast of Trumpets, had that character (Exod. xii. 16 ; Num. xxviii. 18, 25, 26 ; xxix. 1, 12, 35). But in addition to these seven, which made an annual festal series, the weekly Sabbath was also set apart for a "holy convocation," as is expressly stated. The idea of meeting for religious worship and edification was thus associated with it in an important section of the Book of Leviticus, which gives the list of sacred days with which meetings for worship were connected (Lev. xxiii. 1-8, 15-38). The Levitical law thus designated the weekly Sabbath in a very special sense a day for religious fellowship and edification. The Sabbath and the sanctuary are at times associated in a way which has suggested the inference that there was a gathering for worship or for the hearing of the Law in the courts of God's House (Lev. xix. 30 ; Ezek. xxiii. 38) ; and some have found references to such a custom in passages like Lev. x. 11 ; Deut. xxxiii. 10. The oldest Jewish tradition speaks of the Sabbath as intended to be a stated opportunity for religious instruction and edification. The Old Testament, as we shall



see, contains things which indicate that, at least in the period of the Kings, it was the custom for those who were at a distance from the Temple to avail themselves on the Sabbath of the instructions of the prophets (2 Kings iv. 23). And from the New Testament we learn that in the times after the Exile, when the Synagogue became the religious meeting-place in the Jewish towns and villages, it was the custom to gather there on the Sabbath-day for the reading of the Law and the hearing of addresses of exposition and exhortation. So our Lord Himself taught in the synagogues of Galilee (Luke iv. 15). Paul with his company entered the synagogue of Antioch in Pisidia, "on the Sabbath-day, and sat down," and "after the reading of the law and the prophets," he discoursed to the people at the request of the rulers, reminding them of the "voices of the prophets which are read every sabbath-day," and preaching the Risen Messiah (Acts xiii. 14, 15, 27). At the meeting of the Apostles and elders in Jerusalem, too, at which Paul and Barnabas were recognised and the Gentiles were declared to be free of the necessity of being circumcised, James referred to the public reading of Scripture on the Sabbath as an institution of ancient date and universal prevalence, in these words: "For Moses of old time hath in every city them that preach him, being read in the synagogues every sabbath-day" (Acts xv. 21).

37. POSITIVE ENACTMENTS; SPECIAL OFFERINGS (Num. xxviii. 9, 10; Lev. xxiv. 5-9).—The sacrifices which were offered every day in the regular Temple service included the burnt-

offering of two lambs of the first year, one in the morning and one in the evening. Meal-offerings of flour, oil, and wine accompanied these (Exod. xxix. 38-42 ; Num. xxviii. 1-8). But on the Sabbath both the burnt-offering and the meal-offering were doubled (Num. xxviii. 9, 10). These offerings probably expressed the complete consecration of the people to God, their thanksgivings, their homage, and their recognition of the relations of grace and dependence between Him and them. The shewbread, also, which is repeatedly mentioned in the Law, in the historical books of the Old Testament, and in the New Testament writings (*e.g.*, Exod. xxv. 30 ; xxxv. 13 ; xxxix. 36 ; Num. iv. 7 ; 1 Sam. xxi. 6 ; 1 Kings vii. 48 ; 1 Chron. ix. 32 ; 2 Chron. iv. 11 ; Matt. xii. 4 ; Heb. ix. 2), was renewed on the Sabbath-day (Lev. xxiv. 5-9). This shewbread, or Bread of the Presence, or "Presence Bread" (as the Revised Version renders it in the margin) consisted of twelve newly baked loaves, placed in two rows, or piles, of six each on the table of Shittim wood in the sanctuary, and sprinkled with incense. These loaves remained till the end of the week. They were then removed and eaten by the priests, and replaced on the Sabbath by a fresh set of twelve. What was precisely meant by this ceremonial is far from certain. But it was another sign of the covenant between Israel and God, and it has been understood to mean the bread through which God is seen, or with which the vision of God is connected. So it has been taken to be not merely a token of the dependence of Israel on God for physical

support, but the symbol of a higher life than the physical, and of a bread whereof if the people ate, they should see God's face and have the joy of life and fellowship with Him. It was another expressive sign of the covenant between Israel and God ; as such it had a sacred significance, which made it appropriate that the Sabbath should be the day of its renewal.

Thus the religious meaning of the Sabbath was expressed by many of these prescriptions of the Law. In various ways they instructed the people in the sacred character of the day as an ordinance in which God was to be acknowledged and by which opportunities were provided for worship and edification. Neither did these Levitical enactments overlook what the Sabbath was intended to be also to the families of Israel. Piety and filial duty were intimately associated in the faith of the Covenant people, and the institution which secured rest for the toiler, time for worship, and facility for instruction in Divine things, was also recognised to be the fence of all that was best and most gracious in the home. As in the Decalogue itself, the Commandment which bids us *remember the Sabbath-day to keep it holy*, is followed immediately by that which binds us to *honour father and mother* ; so in the Levitical Law the great law of filial duty is repeated in one breath with that of observing this sacred day. "Ye shall fear every man his mother and his father, and keep my sabbaths : I am the Lord your God" (Lev. xix. 3).

38. THE SABBATH IN THE HISTORICAL BOOKS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT (2 Kings

iv. 23; xi. 5, 7; xvi. 18).—The Sabbath is only sparingly mentioned in the historical books which give the narrative of events between the Mosaic age and the return from the Babylonian exile. In the Books of Kings and Chronicles, however, there are some interesting references to it. In the affecting story of the sickness and death of the Shunammite's child, the mother asks her husband to send for one of the young men and one of the asses that she may "run to the man of God;" and the husband asks her, "Wherefore wilt thou go to him to-day? It is neither new moon nor sabbath" (2 Kings iv. 23). This passage may point, as we have seen, to the custom of consulting the prophets on the Day of Rest. It is taken indeed to imply that meetings for worship were regularly held on these days—new moon and Sabbath—and that they were not omitted even in the evil times of the house of Ahab. We have two accounts again of Athaliah's slaughter of the males of the royal family in order that she might hold the throne for herself; of the rescue of one son of the kingly house of Ahaziah, the boy Joash, by Jehosheba, the daughter of King Joram; and of the steps taken by Jehoiada for the overthrow of the Baal-worshipping queen, and for the placing of Joash on the throne (2 Kings xi. 1-16; 2 Chron. xxii. 10; xxiii. 12-15). In these it is mentioned that Jehoiada took those steps on the Sabbath; and that the guards who went on duty and those who went off duty on the Sabbath were appointed to look to the safety of the young king's person and the protection of the palace on that occasion. In the account of the desecration

of the Temple by King Ahaz, in his desire to set up in the sanctuary something like the heathen altar which he had seen in Damascus, it is stated that "the covert for the sabbath that they had built in the house, and the king's entry without, turned he from the house of the Lord for the king of Assyria" (2 Kings xvi. 18). From this it appears that the king was accustomed to go to worship in the Temple on the Sabbath; that a "covered way" (R.V.) or colonnade had been made for him to pass along at such times; and that because of the king of Assyria a change was made in that "covert," by which is meant, perhaps, that it was stripped of its decorations, lest they should excite the greed of the grasping Assyrian.

39. THE SABBATH IN THE HISTORICAL BOOKS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT; CHRONICLES (1 Chron. ix. 32; 2 Chron. xxiii. 8; xxxvi. 21).—The Books of Chronicles also contain some references to the Sabbath and the Sabbath-laws, which should be noticed. One of these, relating the measures taken for the protection and proclamation of Joash on the Sabbath-day, is mentioned along with the parallel passage in 2 Kings in the previous paragraph (2 Chron. xxiii. 8). In addition to this, we learn from another passage that the duty of preparing the shewbread on the Sabbaths was committed to Levites of the highest rank, those of the family of Kohath (1 Chron. ix. 32). And a third reference, one, too, of a remarkable kind, occurs near the close of the Second Book of Chronicles. There we have an account of the unworthy reign of Zedekiah, the transgressions of the people, and

the consequent destruction of Jerusalem, burning of the Temple, and deportation of the Jews into Babylonia. The author of the book adds that the Jewish people were to be servants of the Babylonian kings in the land of exile "until the reign of the kingdom of Persia," and that this was to be in order "to fulfil the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed her sabbaths; for as long as she lay desolate she kept sabbath, to fulfil threescore and ten years" (2 Chron. xxxvi. 21). Among the promises and threatenings recorded in the Book of Leviticus, it had been declared that if Israel refused to hearken to the Lord and walked contrary to Him, their sin would be punished by the wasting of their cities and sanctuaries, and the dispersion of their people among the heathen. And of that penal desolation it had been said: "Then shall the land enjoy her sabbaths, as long as it lieth desolate, and ye be in your enemies' land; *even* then shall the land rest, and enjoy her sabbaths. As long as it lieth desolate it shall rest; because it did not rest in your sabbaths, when ye dwelt upon it" (Lev. xxvi. 34, 35). The Book of Chronicles speaks of this word of the Levitical Law as fulfilled in the miseries of the exile; and the desolation of Judah, lasting through seventy years, is given as the Divine retribution for the neglect of the Sabbath-laws. By the non-observance of the Sabbaths and the Sabbath-years, the land had been deprived through a long tract of years of the rest appointed for it under the Divine Law, and the conditions of the exile are described as continuing for a like

period until the land should recover what it had lost.

40. THE SABBATH IN THE HISTORICAL BOOKS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT; NEHEMIAH (ix. 14; x. 31, 33).—The historical books which give the annals of the Jewish exiles after their return to their own land, make only occasional mention of the Sabbath. The passages which deal with it, however, are of much interest. They occur in Nehemiah. That book gives the story of the permission granted by the Persian monarch to his favourite cup-bearer to proceed to Jerusalem and rebuild the walls; of the opposition which Nehemiah met, and the rapidity with which he pressed on the work; of the patriotic zeal of the people, and the revival of religious enthusiasm among them; and of the various steps taken by the Governor for the redress of evils, the reading of the Law, and the renewal of the national life. Among other things, the Sabbath engaged the attention of Nehemiah as a Reformer. On the day on which the people were convened to make confession of the national sins, and to engage themselves anew by covenant to honour God's Law, they were reminded of the right judgments which God gave them from Sinai, and how He made known unto them His "holy sabbath" (Neh. ix. 14). They bound themselves, also, to the strict observance of the Sabbath-day and the Sabbath-year, to abstain from traffic on the former and from the exaction of debt on the latter. The general principle of rest which had been given in the Fourth Commandment, was now declared to mean the prohibition of all buying on the Sabbath.

Their intercourse with the heathen dwellers in the land was a strong and constant temptation to the Jews to engage in trade transactions on the holy day. Nehemiah saw that the people could be preserved from this only by the rule of complete abstention from all buying and selling on that day; and they were pledged, therefore, not to purchase either wares or food which might be exposed for sale by their heathen neighbours. The law of the seventh year, which brought rest to the land and a suspension of the right to exact debt for the period, was also re-inforced (Neh. x. 31). Provision was made at the same time that every grown Israelite should charge himself yearly with the payment of "the third part of a shekel" for the service of the house of God, "for the shewbread, and for the continual meat-offering (or meal-offering), and for the continual burnt-offering of the sabbaths" (Neh. x. 33).

41. THE SABBATH IN THE HISTORICAL BOOKS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT; NEHEMIAH (xiii. 15-22).—The abuses, however, which Nehemiah grappled with resolutely and energetically on the occasion of his first mission to Jerusalem, were renewed after he returned to the Persian Court. In consequence of this he made a second visit to the holy city in the year 432 B.C. He found the purity and piety of the people again seriously endangered by the permission of mixed marriages and the policy of entering into foreign alliances, the priests themselves being chief offenders. He made the painful discovery, not only that the contributions which the people had pledged themselves to give for the maintenance of the Temple services were



withheld, but that the Sabbath itself was desecrated and traffic pursued with Gentile traders through its sacred hours. He saw secular work of various kinds allowed to go on, the winepresses in active operation, the sheaves or "heaps of corn" (R.V., margin) being brought in, beasts of burden passing in laden with wine, grapes, figs, and other commodities, Tyrians selling fish and other wares, and the Covenant people making their purchases. He protested with the nobles of Judah against these profanations, and in order to check them, ordered the gates of the city to be closed before the Sabbath entered and to be kept shut till the day was done. He posted his own servants at the gates to prevent the introduction of merchandise. These measures succeeded so far, but were not sufficient. The merchants and sellers tried to evade him by settling for the time just without the walls, and offering their wares to such of the Jews as cared to come outside. Nehemiah met this evasion by threatening to lay hands upon all who hung about the walls for purposes of trade. This put a stop to the unholy traffic; and he completed his precautions against it by appointing the Levites to watch the city gates on the Sabbath, and to cleanse themselves for the discharge of so sacred a duty. By these steps the Governor sought to recall the people to a proper sense of the sanctity of the day, the obligation they were under to keep it, and the necessity of maintaining it in the utmost stringency of its laws as a fence against perilous and corrupting compliance with heathen ideas and heathen practice (Neh. xiii. 15-22).

42. THE SABBATH AND THE PROPHETS ; AMOS AND HOSEA (Amos viii. 5 ; Hosea ii. 11). The Prophetical Books contain many statements on the Sabbath which will repay our study. They are of interest as showing us how the institution was regarded at different times, both during the continuance of the kingdom and after its subversion. In the writings of such prophets as Amos and Hosea, we see how it fared with the Sabbath in the eighth century B.C.—a period of great importance in the history of Judah and Israel. From Amos, the shepherd of Tekoa, a small place some twelve miles south of Jerusalem, whose ministry belongs to the first half of the eighth century, we gather how the day was esteemed during the reigns of Uzziah, King of Judah, and Jeroboam, King of Israel. His prophecy is a prophecy of judgment on the kingdom of Israel because of its sins of injustice and false worship, the luxury in which the ruling classes indulged, the wrongs done to the poor. Under the figure of a basket of summer fruit (viii. 1-3), Amos represents the nation as ripe for judgment. Among the things which marked the people out as ready for doom, he mentions the greed of gain which had eaten into the hearts of the privileged and well-to-do classes, making the Sabbath a weariness to them, and tempting them to fraud in their commercial transactions. They kept the religious times appointed by the Law, but they did it in a spirit which grudged them as interferences with the great business of amassing wealth by whatever means, just or unjust. They fretted for the close of the new moon and the Sabbath-day, that they might return to the selling of

their corn and wheat (viii. 5). The prophecy of Hosea, the son of Beeri, is of interest among other things for the circumstance that it is the only written prophecy which has come down to us from a native of the Northern kingdom. His prophetic ministry belongs to the period preceding and following the death of Jeroboam II., in 729 B.C. He speaks of the idolatries of Israel as sins against Jehovah's love, and among the divine punishments which would come upon the persistent unfaithfulness of the people to their Covenant God, he announces the loss of their Sabbaths. The institution existed, but the joy of that day and other appointed times of gladness, rest, and worship, would pass away from a faithless and treacherous nation (ii. 11).

43. THE SABBATH IN THE PROPHETS; FIRST HALF OF ISAAH (Is. i. 10-17).—Isaiah, the son of Amoz, a native of Judah, and the greatest of the prophets of the Old Testament, fulfilled a ministry extending over at least forty years (about 740-701 B.C.). The writings which we possess under his great name make frequent reference to the Sabbath, and help us to understand the place which it had in the national life at the different points of time in view in these prophecies. Those references are few in number, and they are limited mostly to the second half of the book. In the opening chapter, however, we have one instructive instance.

This chapter, which makes a preface to the whole book, has been called "The Great Arraignment." It takes the form of a judicial case between the people of Judah as the defendants, and God as at once the Plaintiff and the Judge, the prophet being

witness. The burden of it is the worthlessness, the hatefulness, of a religion which is not of the spirit, but of the letter, consisting in laborious sacrifice, ritual, and observance, all associated with injustice, cruelty, and wrong. The Sabbath was kept in these days, as the other institutions of the Law were kept. It was observed even with punctilious carefulness. But all was done formally and perfunctorily, in a spirit which made scrupulous attention to the letter of the divine ordinances an excuse for further license in all unrighteousness. It was the prophet's mission to recall the people to morality and duty; to re-awaken in them the sense of God's purpose in the Sabbath, in sacrifice, in sacred seasons, and in assemblies for worship; and to bring home to their conscience His repugnance to ordinances divorced from integrity and piety. The Sabbath *and* iniquity, the solemn assembly *and* wickedness—this was a conjunction He could not bear. "New moon and sabbath, the calling of assemblies,—I cannot away with iniquity and the solemn assembly" (i. 13, R.V.).

44. THE SABBATH IN THE PROPHETS; SECOND HALF OF ISAIAH (lvi. 1-8; lviii. 13, 14; lxvi. 22-24).—In the sublime chapters of the second half of Isaiah, which make the crown of Old Testament prophecy, the Sabbath appears as an ordinance of privilege and joy. A special place is reserved for its sanctification among the lofty exhortations to the practice of the just and good with which these chapters ring. It is commended as a thing in closest association with righteousness of life. In view of their near salvation, the people

of Jehovah are charged to “keep judgement and do righteousness” (lvi. 1, R.V.). The man who does this in truth and constancy, neither profaning the Sabbath nor putting his hand to evil, is assured of the Divine blessing. And the prophet adds that this blessing is as unrestricted as it is unailing. None need fear to be excluded from it. Two classes are introduced as most under temptation to harbour such fear—Gentiles who attach themselves to the faith of the true God, and sons of Israel suffering and serving in heathen courts. But the latter, if they honour the Sabbaths of the Lord and are true to His Covenant, will have within God’s walls “a memorial and a name better than of sons and of daughters” (lvi. 4, 5, R.V.). And for the former there will be access to His holy mountain, joy in His house of prayer, and acceptance for their offerings. The blessing which respect for the Sabbath brings is not only for the Jew at home, but for the Jew in foreign courts; not for the Jew alone, but also, and equally, for the stranger resident in the land. In another chapter which sets true worship over against the false, the spiritual fast over against the formal, and the grace of goodness over against the misery of wickedness, the hallowing of the Sabbath of the Lord is conjoined with the fulfilment of the great duties of love and right between man and man. To him who is true to the latter there is the promise of light, guidance, satisfaction, life (lviii. 10-12). And to him who honours the former, not treading the holy ground of God’s Day with the trader’s foot, not profaning it by pursuits of selfishness or secular business, but rejoicing in it for what it is in the Divine

purpose, there is the assurance of honour and reward. It will be the secret of glad fellowship with his God. His delight in God's Day will have the seal of God's delight in him (lviii. 13, 14). And the vision of the new heavens and the new earth with which these majestic prophecies close, the vision of the Divine kingdom which the prophet saw beyond the confusions of the present, is expressed in terms of the sanctities of the Sabbath. It is the vision of a regenerate society in which God shall be owned by a worship answering the Divine idea of Israel's sacred seasons, continuous as from Sabbath to Sabbath, and joyfully offered not by the Jew only but by all flesh. The prophet could form no higher conception of that new order which was to be the goal of Israel's history than the perfection and perpetuation of all that the Sabbath meant (lxvi. 23).

45. **THE SABBATH IN THE PROPHETS; JEREMIAH AND LAMENTATIONS** (Jer. xvii. 21-27; Lam. i. 7; ii. 6).—Jeremiah, the prophet of sorrow, of the priestly city of Anathoth, one of the noblest figures in the whole prophetic train, also preaches respect for the Sabbath as the foundation of all godliness. His ministry, extending as it did through the reigns of Josiah, Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin, and the bitter days of Zedekiah, the sacking of Jerusalem, the burning of the Temple, and the overthrow of the Jewish State, was cast in times of great social and political change, and of lamentable neglect of piety and morality. Like Cassandra, the prophetess of Troy, he had to speak of national disaster, and to speak unheeded. Yet he could also promise the suspension of judgment

and the restoration of national prosperity as in God's hand for a people who would turn again to righteousness and religion ; and it is regard for the Day of Rest that he singles out as the test of all genuine conformity to the Divine Law. The sense of the sanctity and beneficence of the Sabbath had perished in those evil times of national decay. It was desecrated by trade and manual work. Town and country joined hands in secularising it. The rural population brought in their burdens of produce for sale in Jerusalem, and the city folk brought out their wares for traffic on the day which was meant to be sanctified to the Lord (xvii. 21, 22). And the prophet's word to kings, princes, and people is, that a return to the hallowing of the Sabbath will bring a return of religion, and with that a return of prosperity and an assurance of continuance ; but that persistence in the profanation of this ordinance will issue in national destruction (xvii. 24-27). In the Book of *Lamentations*, which is ascribed to the same prophet, and in which we have a series of pathetic dirges bewailing the bitterness of the cup given to the Jews to drink in the capture of the city by Nebuchadnezzar, and its consequences, Jerusalem is represented as remembering "in the days of her affliction and misery all her pleasant things that she had in the days of old," and among these her Sabbaths, which had become a mockery to her heathen adversaries (i. 7). The bitterest thing, too, in this cup of bitterness, is the consciousness that the loss is the just penalty of national sin. It is the Lord Himself in His righteous judgment of His

people that has "caused the solemn feasts and sabbaths to be forgotten in Zion" (ii. 6).

46. THE SABBATH IN THE PROPHETS; EZEKIEL'S ANNOUNCEMENTS OF JUDGMENT (Ezek. xx. 12, 16, 24; xxii. 8, 26; xxiii. 38).—Ezekiel, the priest, probably of the house of Zadok, was carried into captivity in Babylon along with Jechoniah and the flower of the people in the year 597 B.C., and was settled with a band of the Jewish exiles at Tel-Abib, by the stream Chebar. His prophecies, which show the influence of the teachings of Jeremiah, fall into two distinct halves and deal with two great themes—the destruction of the State and its final restoration. In both divisions the Sabbath is introduced, in Jeremiah's way, as a central subject; in the one as a chief article in the indictment against Jerusalem, in the other as a main feature of the restoration. In his survey of Hebrew history, the prophet recalls the deliverance from Egypt and the life in the wilderness, with the statutes and judgments which the Lord gave His people that they might live by them. Among these he specially instances the Sabbaths, which were given to be a "sign" between Israel and Jehovah, witnessing to the fact that He was their God and they His people (xx. 10-12). He reminds his fellow-countrymen in the day of disaster how their fathers failed in their covenant, and incurred the Divine judgment, by polluting the Sabbaths which they should have sanctified (xx. 13-24). The same note is struck in the fresh indictment against the city which occupies the twenty-second and twenty-third chapters. In the



deadly list of Jerusalem's sins, the lewdness, extortion, dishonesty, and various vices to which princes, priests, prophets, and people alike gave themselves, the profanation of the Sabbaths and the hiding of the eyes from them are particularised (xxii. 8, 26). And along with other offences of unfaithfulness to God and intrigue with foreign powers with which Samaria and Jerusalem, under the figures of two evil women, Aholah and Aholibah, are charged, the defilement of the sanctuary and the profanation of the Sabbaths are named as sins of deepest guilt committed in the same day. So dead had the people become to the sense of the Divine Law, that they set aside the holy seasons with heathen debasement, and went straight from heathen idolatries and horrid oblations of their children into God's holy house (xxiii. 38, 39).

47. **THE SABBATH IN THE PROPHETS; EZEKIEL'S ANNOUNCEMENTS OF RESTORATION** (Ezek. xlv. 24; xlv. 17; xlvi. 1-4).—As the Sabbath appears in the indictments of sins and in the prophecies of national overthrow which make the burden of the first twenty-four chapters, it has an equally prominent place in the prophecies of final restoration which occupy the last twenty-four chapters. These prophecies take less the form of an announcement of things future than that of a picture of these things as already existing. It is a picture of the Church or Society of Israel brought back to its Divine ideal. In the final condition of His Kingdom, which the Lord for His name's sake has in His purpose, prophet, priest, ruler, and land shall each be according to Jehovah's mind.

The people shall be a people led by His Spirit ; the Temple, with all the holy things of His service, shall be restored ; the Sabbath, with all its grace, and sanctity, and gladness, shall be revived. The priests shall be faithful to their trust, teaching the people to distinguish between the holy and the profane, to keep the Divine laws and statutes in all God's assemblies, and to hallow His Sabbaths (xliv. 24). The people's joy in the Sabbath-day and in the holy service of their God will be the note of the new order in a regenerate Israel. And that joy will express itself in the glad regularity of their worship and the liberality of their offerings. Their gifts shall be placed, without shortcoming or delay, in the hands of their prince, that all may be done according to God's law on the feasts, the new moons, and the Sabbaths (xlv. 17). People, priest, and king shall be one in the solemnities of the Sanctuary. The gate shall be open, that on the Sabbaths the ruler may enter and take his part in the worship, in which the people shall join at the door, while the priests present the offerings (xlvi. 1-3). And these offerings shall not be grudgingly given. The spirit of munificence shall be in the gifts. For the two lambs of the burnt-offering prescribed by the Mosaic Law there shall be six lambs and a ram without blemish ; and for the two-tenth deals of flour mingled with oil, which of old made the meal-offering, there shall be an ephah of flour for the ram, a free gift according to ability for the lambs, and a homer of oil (xlvi. 4, 5). So to this great prophet, who from the bosom of a band of exiles in the conqueror's land spoke of the things

of God and the future of His broken people, the worship of the Temple and the sanctities of the Sabbath were so intimately connected with the worth of life, and the purity of society, and the joy of religion, that the vision of final peace and blessedness was to him a vision of the restoration and perfection of these holy ordinances.

48. **THE SABBATH OF THE OLD TESTAMENT.**—What the Sabbath is in the teaching of the Old Testament as a whole is now clear. Alike in the Law and in the Prophets it is a Divine institution, a gift of God to Israel, intended to serve as a sign of the Covenant, a visible and abiding memorial of the relations of grace and obligation established between the Lord and His people, expressing the truth that, as He gave Himself to be Israel's God, they were to give themselves to be His folk. All through the records of the Old Testament dispensation it has the two great purposes of rest and worship; it is humane in its intention, and religious in its order; it is designed not to be a burden on man's life, but a relief and a joy, the fence of the rights of the dependent and helpless; a witness to man's indebtedness to God for his time, and to man's obligation to consecrate it to Him. It is given as an ordinance on which the Divine blessing lies, having God's Creative Rest for its model, speaking of the deed of grace by which He delivered Israel from Egypt and made them a people, and calling men to a Divine order of life in which work, and rest, and worship shall have each its place—an order of life worthy of a being made in God's image, and received into His fellowship. It appears, also,

that it underwent a certain measure of change consistent with its principle, and that it was observed with different degrees of faithfulness at different periods. In its history there are things to indicate that the element of worship in the ordinance was increasingly recognised, until it obtained its final place in the full and orderly service of the Synagogue after the Exile. We find, too, that the restrictions on work became more definite and pronounced in the later stage of Israel's history, when marketing and trading were stringently forbidden, and measures like those of Nehemiah were adopted to give effect to the prohibition. Further, it is gathered, especially from the writings of the Prophets, that it was largely neglected before the Captivity, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and others speaking of its profanation as one of the chief of the national sins; that its significance and value were better owned in the period of the Exile and its law more strictly observed; and that, from the time when Nehemiah bound the people to a new Covenant, the sin of neglect was no longer chargeable against them. This also is matter of history that at no period, not even in that of the most rigorous legal enforcement of its observance, did it cease to be regarded as an ordinance of beneficence and joy, the minister, not the taskmaster of man.

49. THE SABBATH OF JUDAISM.—The experiences of the Exile made a deep and lasting impression on the Jews, their national ideas, their beliefs, and their attitude to the Law. Among other things they regained for the Sabbath such a place in the mind and life of the people, that it

became more than almost any other ordinance or institute the embodiment of their religion, the heart of their Law, and the observance which marked them off most sharply from other nations. It was natural that it should be so. During the Captivity the Jews were cut off from the use of those of their religious ordinances and services, which had their home in Jerusalem and the Holy Land itself. In these circumstances the Sabbath, which they could observe by the streams of Babylon, was naturally the more valued, and it became perhaps the chief means of sustaining the national spirit and keeping them together as a people. But this quickened interest in the Sabbath and this stricter observance of its laws to which the Exile gave the impulse, went from one degree of stringency to another, in course of time, until the beneficence of the institution and its Divine purpose were lost in a mass of punctilious formalities and minute regulations confusing to conscience, burdensome to life, and far removed from the inwardness of true piety. The change which set in during the centuries between the Exile and our Lord's time resulted in Judaism, a harder and more external form of religion than the earlier faith of Israel, in the rigour and formalism of the Pharisees and Scribes, and in an idea of life and duty which, alike in morals and in piety, sacrificed the spirit to the letter, internal disposition to external correctness, the homage of the soul to ceremonial scrupulosity. Like other things, the Sabbath was deeply and disastrously affected by this change, and became a severe ordinance hedged about by a thousand restrictions and endless unspiritual pronouncements on the letter of its observance.

50. **THE SABBATH OF THE SCRIBES.**—The professional custodiers and interpreters of the Law, known to us in the Gospels as the Scribes, engaged themselves very largely with questions of the Sabbath-law. Some of their decisions, no doubt, were of the nature of just and reasonable applications of the Law to new circumstances. But, in many cases, they were of the nature of petty, casuistical, or even absurd refinements on the Law, which emptied the Sabbath institute of all spirituality and of all graciousness. They explained the broad principle of rest from work as implying the prohibition of no less than thirty-nine distinct kinds of work, not only sowing, ploughing, reaping, and the like, but making two cords, weaving or separating two threads, making or untying a knot, sewing two stitches, writing two letters, carrying from one tenement to another, and so forth. Each of these thirty forbidden kinds of work, again, was made the subject of further distinctions, exceptions, and qualifications. In the case of knots, for example, it was declared to be lawful to tie or untie where only one hand was needed, to tie the strings of a woman's cap or girdle, to fasten the straps of the sandal or shoe. But the tying of the knots of camel-drivers or sailors was held a breach of the Sabbath-law. Definitions no less intricate were given in connection with the rule against bearing burdens. It was laid down with curious precision that, in the case of carrying any of the commodities of life out of the house, the quantity that would amount to a desecration of the Sabbath was so much food as might equal a dry fig in weight, so much wine as might be mixed in a goblet, so

much milk as might be swallowed at one draught. Nor did the painful, sophistical genius of the Scribes pause even there. It carried its subtleties into the remoter region of things which might only be possible occasions of a breach of any of these rules. A writer was not allowed to go out with his reed at twilight, nor a tailor with his needle, lest he should forget when the Sabbath entered and profane it by the things of his craft. It was pronounced a profanation of the Sabbath to climb a tree or ride a horse, and extreme positions were taken with regard to the use of arms. In the great struggle between the Jews and their Græco-Syrian oppressors in the time of the Maccabees, there were men who stood so sternly on the law of abstinence from work that they preferred to let themselves be cut off to a man rather than handle the sword on the Sabbath. Hostile powers were quick to see the advantage of attacking the Jews on their Day of Rest. The dangers of this rigid construction of the Sabbath-law led to its being declared allowable to fight in self-defence, though not otherwise, on the Sabbath. But the prevailing feeling on the subject was so impracticable, that the Romans found it necessary to relieve the Jews from military service. In this way the Old Testament Day of Rest had, to a large extent, been turned into one of the "heavy burdens and grievous to be borne" of which our Lord speaks (Matt. xxiii. 4), and its Divine purpose was lost in an intolerable confusion of lawyer's refinements and the mere externals of its observance.

**51. THE SABBATH OF THE NEW TESTAMENT; THE GOSPELS** (Matt. xxiv. 20; John

xix. 31 ; Luke xxiii. 54).—When Christ came the Sabbath of the Ten Words had been reduced to this Sabbath of the Scribes, and the commandment of God had been made of none effect by the tradition of men. It was our Lord's object in many of His words and works to relieve the Sabbath from the deadening pressure of Pharisaic formalism and sophistry, to restore the Day of Rest to what God meant it to be, and to carry its Divine idea to its highest and most spiritual fulfilment. In this He was often brought into collision with the professional teachers and guardians of the Law, and so we have frequent references to the Sabbath in the Gospels. These show us both how the institution was regarded at the time by the different classes of the Jewish people and what it was to Christ Himself. With respect to the former, the perverted, slavish, unspiritual doctrine of the Sabbath which was taught by the Scribes and adhered to with an ostentatious rigidity by the Pharisaic class, appears on many occasions, especially, as we shall see, in connection with certain of our Lord's works of healing. Other things give us some insight into popular feeling on the subject and into existing Sabbatarian regulations. Thus, in his narrative of the discourse on the approaching destruction of Jerusalem, Matthew records Christ to have said, "But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath-day" (Matt. xxiv. 20). The first Gospel, the distinctively Hebrew Gospel, is the only one of the three Synoptists that preserves these words "on the sabbath-day"; and the notice implies that the restrictions on moving from place to place and



passing within or without cities were in full force. Unbending observers of the Sabbath-law as interpreted by the Scribes had cause to pray that the impending calamity might not befall them on that day. Their own scrupulosities on the length of a Sabbath-day's journey and the stringent ordinances on the shutting of the gates of cities, would bar their flight on that day. The mention of the day of "the preparation," that is, the day immediately preceding the Sabbath and preparing for its solemn observance, witnesses to the sanctity in which it was held. John records the appeal of the Jews to Pilate to have the bodies removed from the Cross, because it was "the preparation." By the Law of Deuteronomy (xxi. 22, 23), it was provided that the body of a crucified offender should not hang all night upon the tree. In the case of our Lord and His companions in death, these Jews were the more anxious to see the bodies taken away, because the Sabbath which was approaching was one of double sacredness, being not only an ordinary Sabbath, but the first day of Passover, which also was a Sabbath (John xix. 31). And when Luke narrates how Joseph of Arimathea obtained our Lord's body from Pilate, and wrapped it in linen, and laid it in the rock-hewn sepulchre, "wherein never man before was laid," he adds that "that day was the preparation, and the sabbath drew on" (Luke xxiii. 53, 54).

52. CHRIST'S OWN ATTITUDE TO THE SABBATH (Matt. v. 17; Luke iv. 16-32; Mark vi. 1-6).—In the Sermon on the Mount our Lord explained what He was to be in relation to the ancient religion of Israel in these terms, "Think not that

I am come to destroy the law or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil" (Matt. v. 17). This was the principle at once of His action and of His teaching in the matter of the Sabbath. He honoured it for what it was designed to be, and had a Son's regard for it, and for every ordinance of Israel which expressed His Father's will. As He was found in the Temple about His Father's business at the age of twelve, so in after years He was no stranger to the synagogue, the place of worship, on the Sabbath-day. At the beginning of His public work, when He returned to Nazareth after His ministry in Judæa and His journey through Samaria, "He went into the synagogue on the sabbath-day and stood up for to read." The third Evangelist, in recording this, states at the same time that Jesus did this "as His custom was." From this we gather that before this time He was in the habit of joining in the services of the Synagogue on the Sabbath, taking part, perhaps, in the prayers and the Scripture-readings. On this occasion He expressed His wish to address the congregation; and having the Scriptures handed to Him, He preached. Thus it was on a Sabbath, and in the course of the usual public worship, that He made His first distinct statement to His own people of His claims to be their Messiah (Luke iv.). At a later date He made another visit to Nazareth, not alone, as on the earlier occasion, but in the company of His disciples, and with a fame now spread throughout the land as a prophet. And on this occasion, too, it is reported that "when the sabbath-day was come, He began to teach in the

synagogue" (Mark vi. 2 ; *cf.* Matt. xiii. 54). And at various points in His ministry the Gospels call attention to His practice in this matter, apart from what we shall see in their narratives of His miracles. They tell us that, when He "returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee" after His temptation, "He taught in their synagogues, being glorified of all" (Luke iv. 14, 15); that after His retreat to "the desert place," He "preached in all the synagogues of Galilee" (Luke iv. 44); that after the Call of the disciples by the sea, He "went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues" (Matt. iv. 23; Mark i. 39; Luke xiii. 10); that during His third circuit in Northern Israel He "went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues" (Matt. ix. 35); that in presence of the High Priest He appealed to the fact that He "ever taught in the synagogue, and in the temple, whither the Jews always resort" (John xviii. 20). So He honoured the ordinances of worship and joined Himself with the congregation at the stated times of service. In all His life nothing was watched with more jealous or suspicious vigilance than His observance of the Sabbath. And in all that was done to find in Him something worthy of condemnation in this matter, no breach of the Sabbath of the Ten Words could be alleged against Him, nor any disregard of its Divine purpose.

53. **CHRIST AND THE SABBATH OF THE SCRIBES** (Matt. xii. 1, 2; Mark ii. 23, 24; Luke vi. 1, 2).—Our Lord's method of keeping the Sabbath, however, was unlike that of the Scribes, and excited their bitterest hostility. Because it was in accord-

ance with the Divine idea of the ordinance, it was in conflict with the unauthorised additions, pedantic rules, and meaningless distinctions by which a decadent Judaism had stripped it of its grace and spiritual worth. Things which He did or allowed to be done on the Sabbath were turned by the Pharisees into charges of Sabbath desecration. In meeting these charges He stated great principles which lie at the basis of the whole law of a Day of Rest, especially in its New Testament form. The things chiefly resented by those superficial Jewish religionists were works which He Himself did on the day, and we have a series of Sabbath-day miracles of healing which excited the bitterest animosity of the Scribes and their party. But things of a different kind, which He permitted His disciples to do unchecked, were also made matter of offence. We have an instance of the latter in the narrative of the Plucking of the Ears of Corn, which is given by all the three Synoptists. While on a certain Sabbath-day Jesus and His disciples were walking through certain cornfields in the neighbourhood of Capernaum, as it appears, the latter being hungry began to pluck and eat the ripe ears. In itself this was quite an allowable thing. The law of Deuteronomy, which forbade one to use the sickle on his neighbour's standing corn, expressly permitted him to pluck the ears with his hand (Deut. xxiii. 25). But Rabbinical refinements had pronounced this permission void on the Sabbath. Ploughing and reaping were among the works forbidden on the seventh day by the Law (Exod. xxxiv. 21); and the misdirected genius of the

Scribes, setting itself to define the precise application of this prohibition, had declared that gathering a few ears of corn amounted to reaping. For this reason the Pharisees objected to our Lord's allowance of this act on the part of His disciples as a tacit approval of a breach of the Sabbath-law.

54. **CHRIST'S REFUTATION OF THE PHARISAIC IDEA OF THE SABBATH** (Matt. xii. 3-8 ; Mark ii. 25-28 ; Luke vi. 3-5).—Our Lord met these objections with a fourfold reply. First, He pointed His accusers to the testimony of the history of Israel, which was sacred to them, reminding them that even the shewbread which could lawfully be eaten only by the priests, had been eaten by their own King David and his men in their hunger. So He stated the principle that the lower law of ordinances must yield to the higher law of necessity. In the second place He recalled the fact that even this sacred law of the seventh-day Rest was not wholly without qualification in the Mosaic legislation, the priests being allowed to engage in the work which was required for the Temple services. In the third place He affirmed the great principles, which the teaching of their own Prophets and Psalmists should have made familiar to them, that mercy is God's desire and not mere sacrifice, that the grace of the inner life is more than formal obedience to positive statutes, and moral duties more than ceremonial. Finally, as the first three Evangelists agree in stating, He asserted His own lordship over the Sabbath ; and this, as Mark records, on the ground that the Sabbath was made for man and that He was Himself the Son of man. In this great state-

ment He re-affirmed the original purpose of the Sabbath, and declared the source and limit of the authority which was proper to it ; which things had been misinterpreted and perverted by the Scribes. In their hands it had become an external ordinance demanding a painful, mechanical observance. They had dealt with it as if man had been made for its sake, second to it, subject to it, its tool and slave. But the Sabbath had been made for man's sake and his interest, with a view to his highest good, physical and moral. Nothing inconsistent with this could belong to the Sabbath as ordained of God. It was meant to be man's minister for good, not his sovereign. It could not be superior, therefore, to the Son of man—to Him who was the representative Man, the One in whom the Divine idea of Man was made good ; He was lord over the Sabbath, with authority to make it fulfil God's purpose in it and minister anew to man's good. And nothing done by His disciples under His authority could be a desecration of the Sabbath, as the Pharisees vainly imagined.

55. **THE FIRST SABBATH MIRACLES** (Matt. viii. 14-17 ; Mark i. 21-34 ; Luke iv. 31-41).—Things which Christ Himself did, however, on the Sabbath were the greatest offence. Nothing more exasperated the Scribes than His works of healing on that day. The first of the series recorded in the Gospels took place in the synagogue of Capernaum on the Sabbath immediately following the Call of the four disciples. It was the cure of a man afflicted by the terrible and mysterious malady of demoniacal possession (Mark i. 21-28 ; Luke iv. 31-37). The second occurred in a

private house after the synagogue service was over. It was the complete and immediate restoration of Peter's mother-in-law, who had been prostrate with an acute fever (Matt. viii. 14, 15; Mark i. 29-31; Luke iv. 38, 39). On neither of these occasions is it said that the healing work was made the subject of reproach or attack. The impression produced was amazement, and the spreading of the fame of Jesus through all the surrounding districts. But the scrupulosity of the Jews in the matter of the Sabbath appears in the following statement, that it was only when "even was come" and "the sun did set," that the people ventured to bring the multitudes of their diseased and possessed for the great Healer to attend to them. For the Sabbath was regarded as over when the sun came to set, and the Jew then felt himself free of the traditional restrictions (Matt. viii. 16, 17, Mark i. 32-34; Luke iv. 40, 41).

**56. THE SABBATH MIRACLE AT THE POOL OF BETHESDA** (John v. 1-18).—It was different with other works of healing which were done after this date. The scene of what appears to have been the first of these later works was Jerusalem itself. Jesus had gone up from Galilee to keep one of the stated Jewish Feasts in the capital. He found a crowd of ailing folk lying in the porches of the Pool of Bethesda, waiting for the troubling of the water. One of these sufferers, a man who had been ill for thirty-eight long years, roused His special compassion. He healed the man and at the same time bade him take up his bed and walk. The thing thus done on the Sabbath was held to be a double

offence, itself a work inconsistent with the law of Rest, and the cause of a work, the carrying of the bed, equally at variance with the traditional prescription. For the Scribes had declared that to carry so much as the smallest piece of parchment or any garment not making part of one's necessary clothing amounted to "work" forbidden by the Law. This deed of mercy roused the deadly hostility of the official Jews, so that they did "persecute Jesus, and sought to slay Him" (John v. 16). Their murderous enmity was made the more intense by the answer which He gave them—"My Father worketh hitherto, and I work" (John v. 17). In these majestic words He at once asserted His own Divine Sonship with all the authority belonging to that, and proclaimed His deed to be one after the Divine order. His argument is that "He is no more a breaker of the Sabbath than God is, when He upholds with an energy that knows no pause, the work of His creation from hour to hour and from moment to moment" (Trench). His Father is working *even until now* (as the R.V. gives it). His creative Rest is a Rest under which He has always been working, and still continues to work, in providence and in grace, for man's good. In this, as in all things, it is for the Son to do as the Father, and nothing that is done in conformity to the Father's example and the Father's benignant purpose can be inconsistent with the law of His Sabbath.

57. SABBATH MIRACLES IN GALILEE AND JERUSALEM (Matt. xii. 9-14; Mark iii. 1-6; Luke vi. 6-11; John ix. 1-41).—Another occasion of offence arose in one of the synagogues of Galilee, probably



that of Capernaum. It occurred soon after the incident of the Plucking of the Ears of Corn, on a Sabbath not far removed, if not on the very next Sabbath. The case of a man with a withered hand appealed to His pity, and He restored the lost vital power. It would seem as if the Pharisees had reckoned on His not being able to resist the sight of such suffering, and were there in order to have the opportunity of bringing him before the local court of justice. Their charge would be based on the Rabbinical prescriptions as to the extent to which the physician's work was allowable on the Sabbath. It had been declared that medical aid could be given only when life was in danger. Fractures, sprains, and maladies like the one in question, therefore, could not be lawfully healed on the Day of Rest. Christ, knowing the casuistries in which these men took refuge, met them with a personal question—How would one of themselves act if a sheep of his fell into a pit on the Sabbath? The question implied that it was regarded then as no breach of the law to lift the animal out; although, at a later date, scruples seem to have been entertained as to whether one could do more than supply the creature with food and defer its rescue till the day was done. So He set aside their objections by showing them that even their own practice in the case of dumb creatures was a confession that to do things in themselves right and merciful could not be wrong on the Sabbath day. Again, in Jerusalem, at a later stage in His ministry, He sent a blind man to the Pool of Siloam for healing on the Sabbath day, having first made clay and opened his eyes (John ix. 1-14).

These latter two acts were taken to be breaches of the law. The Pharisees, however, before whom the man was brought, were not all of one mind on the subject. Some thought that Jesus could not be of God, because He failed to keep the Sabbath after their way. But others argued that such miracles could not be done by one who was a sinner, thereby confessing that such works were no transgressions of the law.

**58. SABBATH HEALINGS AT PLACES UN-NAMED** (Luke xiii. 10-17 ; xiv. 1-6).—In connection with a number of incidents belonging to our Lord's journey through Peraea to Jerusalem, Luke relates the case of a woman, bent and bowed by a malady of eighteen years' standing, whom He healed in an unnamed synagogue on the Sabbath. The hard, merciless protest of the ruler of the synagogue on this occasion drew forth Christ's severe rebuke of the hypocrisy which denied relief to a suffering woman on the Day of Rest and allowed it in the case of a thirsty ox or ass (Luke xiii. 10-17). Along with another series of incidents which may, perhaps, belong to the time when He was journeying between Jerusalem and the Jordan, the same Evangelist tells of the cure of a dropsical man on the Sabbath. Though the Jews cooked no food on the sacred day, it was their custom to have a good table, and to attend to the duties of hospitality. On this occasion a Pharisee of distinction had invited our Lord to meat with him, and as they sat at table this afflicted man found his way in and was healed. The lawyers and the Pharisees who had been on the watch were met with the question whether they

held it lawful to heal on the Sabbath-day, and then with the question whether they would not at once pull their ox or their ass out of a pit on that day. And to neither question could they give a reply. So ended the last of the series of attempts recorded by the Gospels to find occasion against Christ in His works of healing on the Day of Rest.

59. **THE FIRST TOKEN OF ANOTHER SACRED DAY** (Matt. xxviii. 1-10; Mark xvi. 1-14; Luke xxiii. 55-xxiv. 1-35; John xx. 1-25).—Thus our Lord Himself honoured the Sabbath, rescuing it at the same time from the perversions of the Scribes, exhibiting it again as an ordinance of grace and spirituality, and vindicating a liberty in the use of it consistent with its nature as an ordinance made for man. In His own use of it He appealed to the Divine example, to the end for which it was given, to the supreme law of mercy and good, to the allowance made by the Law itself and acted on by these degenerate Jews in works necessary to the due performance of the rites of religion, as in the case of the Temple services, and again in the case of circumcision (John vii. 22). So to the end of His ministry He honoured the Sabbath, and set its Divine idea before the Jews in all its truth and beauty. But when He finished His ministry in death and rose again “according to the Spirit of holiness” (Rom. i. 4), a new order entered, which gave a new meaning to the ancient ordinance. Our Lord lay in Joseph’s tomb under the power of death during the Sabbath after His Passion. It was “when the sabbath was past” (Mark xvi. 1), “in the end of the sabbath, as it began to dawn to-

ward the first day of the week," that the holy women who had "rested the sabbath-day, according to the commandment" (Luke xxiii. 55), came to the sepulchre with their spices (Matt. xxviii. 1). It was the first day of the week, "very early in the morning," that they found the stone rolled away, and the tomb empty (Mark xvi. 2-4; Luke xxiv. 1-3; John xx. 1, 2). And it was on the same day that the Risen Lord appeared to them and to others (Matt. xxviii. 8-10; Mark xvi. 9-14; Luke xxiv. 14-39; John xx. 11-20; 1 Cor. xv. 5). The Resurrection of Christ was the beginning of a new order which, while preserving and enlarging the purpose of the institution, in time connected it with another day of the week.

60. **THE SABBATH IN THE BOOK OF ACTS** (Acts xiii. 14, 27, 42, 44; xv. 21; xvi. 13; xvii. 2; xviii. 4).—In the history of the planting of the Church by the Apostles after Christ's Ascension, the Sabbath is but seldom mentioned. We see, however, from the Book of Acts how Paul joined in the services of the synagogue on the sacred day, and took occasion to preach to the Jews as they were met for worship. We find him, as has been indicated above, in the synagogue of the Pisidian Antioch on the Sabbath, discoursing of the resurrection of Christ (Acts xiii. 15). The impression produced upon the Gentiles was so great that they besought him to preach to them again the next Sabbath, and on that day he had "about the whole city" assembled to "hear the word of God" (Acts xiii. 42, 44). On the Sabbath also at Philippi, he "went out of the city by a river, where prayer

was wont to be made," and in the quiet of the spot, declared the counsel of God to the devout women (Acts xvi. 13). In Thessalonica, too, and in Corinth he reasoned with Jews and Greeks in the synagogue on the Sabbaths (Acts xvii. 2 ; xviii. 4). But apart from these references to the Jewish custom, the Sabbath does not definitely appear in this history of the early days of the Church. As the first converts, however, and the Apostles themselves, are seen to have continued to attend the devotional services of the Temple (Acts ii. 46 ; iii. 1), we may conclude that the Sabbath also continued to be observed by the Jewish Christians.

61. THE SABBATH IN THE EPISTLES (Heb. iv. 9).—Still scantier mention is made of the Sabbath in the other books of the New Testament. It is nowhere named in the Book of Revelation. Even in the Epistles there are but two passages in which it appears, and there it is only in the background. One is the passage in the Epistle to the Hebrews on the "sabbath rest" (R. V.) that "remaineth for the people of God" (iv. 9). The author of this great Epistle speaks of the purpose of God that men should enter into His Rest. He says that Israel missed the blessedness of this Rest through their unbelief, but that God's purpose stands, and there is therefore yet a "Sabbatism," a Sabbath-keeping for His people. That Sabbath-rest, into which it is still God's will that man should come, is the salvation which Christ has brought to humanity. Here, then, the reference to the Sabbath-ordinance is indirect and figurative. But it indicates what the institution was to devout

and spiritual minds, if it could be used as a figure of the rest which God has promised to Christian men through the revelation of His Son. The joy of the fellowship which we have with God through Christ, the life of perfect satisfaction and blessed realisation which is promised us, this is described in terms of an ideal Sabbath-keeping.

62. **THE SABBATH IN THE EPISTLES** (Col. ii. 16).—The other passage is in the great argument and protestation of the Epistle to the Colossians, in which Paul expresses his longing to see the Christians of Colossae building themselves up more and more on Christ, and putting from them all enticements\* to trust the traditions of men and pretentious philosophies. They were in danger of being drawn away into a form of religion which made everything of ordinances, of going back to Mosaic distinctions which had served their purpose and had given place to something better,—distinctions between meats and drinks which were lawful to use and others which it was a point of religion not to touch. Paul warns them that to yield to this was to mistake the Gospel, to part with their liberty, and to relapse into a religion for children. He charges them to let no one put a yoke upon them which Christ did not impose. Christ Himself had given indication of the abrogation of these distinctions (Mark vii. 14-23), and the same had been revealed to Peter (Acts x. 9-16). As it was with these old Jewish distinctions of clean and unclean, so was it with the old Jewish *times*, whether annual, or monthly, or weekly, whether Feasts, or new moons, or Sabbath-days. They were

to allow no one to judge them in these things, neither should they keep them in a slavish, Judaic spirit. The passage, therefore, is of the same class as those in Romans (xiv. 5-6) and Galatians (iv. 9-11), in which Paul speaks of different degrees of faith and knowledge in the use of sacred days, and of the danger of going back to the Jewish use of set times. It discountenances an ascetic, legal idea of the Sabbath and similar ordinances, as if they and not Christ were the life and the substance of religion. It means that the place of such things is not what it was under the Old Testament. But it does not mean that the Sabbath-institution is abrogated in principle, or that there is no place for the Day of Rest in the religion of Christ.

63. **THE NEW DAY OF REST** (Matt. xxviii. 1; Mark xvi. 2; Luke xxiv. 1; John xx. 1, 19, 26; Acts ii. 1-4; xx. 7; 1 Cor. xvi. 2; Revel. i. 10).—Meantime another day had become one of sacred use and meaning, special consecration, and holiest commemorative purpose. And this day was to take the place of the Jewish seventh-day Sabbath as the Christian Day of Rest. The first day of the week, as all the evangelists agree in stating, was the day on which Christ rose from the dead. It was the day on which the Risen Lord made Himself known to Mary and the holy women (Matt. xxviii. 1; Mark xvi. 1-2, 9; Luke xxiv. 1, 10; John xx. 1, 11-18); to Peter (Luke xxiv. 34); to the two on the way to Emmaus (Luke xxiv. 13). It was on the evening of this day that He first appeared among the Apostles (John xx. 19, 24), and it was on the same day a week later that He appeared a second time among the

same and relieved Thomas of his doubt (John xx. 26). On the Day of Pentecost following the Ascension His disciples received the gift of the Spirit, which marked the birth-day of the Christian Church, and it has been a question whether that momentous Pentecost fell on a Jewish Sabbath or on the first day of the week. It has been an old and general opinion that the latter was the case, and if this conclusion is right, we should have another reason for the passing of the Day of Rest under the Christian religion from the last to the first of the week (Acts ii. 1-4). There are also other intimations within the New Testament that this day had a significance and a sanctity beyond all others, and was specially consecrated to worship and religious use. It was on "the first day of the week," that the disciples in Troas "came together to break bread," and heard Paul preach (Acts xx. 7). It was "upon the first day of the week," too, that Paul instructed the Corinthian Christians every one of them to "lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him" (1 Cor. xvi. 2). These passages indicate that under the ministry of the Apostles the first day of the week was recognised as a day for stated religious worship, for preaching, and for giving. The exhortation in the Epistle to the Hebrews (x. 25), as to "not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together," may point in the same direction. For, though it mentions no particular time, it seems to imply the existence of a regular day for this congregational purpose, and that day would most probably be the one elsewhere noticed in a similar connection. Further, when John speaks of being



“in the Spirit on the Lord’s Day” (Rev. i. 10), he appears to refer to the first day of the week, and to that as a sacred day. It is said, indeed, that the Jewish Sabbath, or Easter Sunday, or the day of Christ’s Second Advent, may be in view. But if the seventh day had been intended, it would have been natural to use its accepted name ; whether Christ’s Resurrection was to be celebrated on the anniversary of the event was not settled at once ; and the expression used here “the Lord’s Day” (the *Dominical* Day, as it might be rendered), is different from “the Day of the Lord,” which is the Biblical phrase for the Second Advent or Last Judgment. The reasonable conclusion, therefore, is that John speaks of the first day of the week, and of it as a day of commemorative significance and religious use. The New Testament thus gives us to understand that in the time of the Apostles, and in their practice if not by their prescription, the first day of the week was consecrated to religious observance. It shows at the same time that Jewish Christians did not break away at once from the wonted services in the Temple. It would appear, therefore, that at this period, while it might be otherwise within the circle of Gentile Christianity, the Jewish Sabbath and the Lord’s Day were both observed, though in different ways and measures, within that of Jewish Christianity.

64. SABBATH AND LORD’S DAY IN POST-APOSTOLIC TIMES.—The literature of the period immediately succeeding that of the Apostles shows that the two days stood in a manner side by side for a length of time. The seventh day continued to be

observed, for the most part as a festal day, but by certain Western Churches, especially that of Rome, as a fast day. But the religious use of the Lord's Day is witnessed to in the very earliest writings. The interesting book, *The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles*, which was discovered quite recently, and which belongs in all probability to the close of the first century, speaks of it, under the peculiar and solemn name of "The Lord's Day of the Lord," or "The Dominical Day of the Lord," as a day on which Christians were to "come together, and break bread, and give thanks" and confess their transgressions. The author of the *Epistle of Barnabas*, dating about the beginning of the second century, says of it—"We celebrate the eighth day with joy, on which Jesus rose from the dead." Justin Martyr, who flourished about 140 A.D., tells us that "on the day called Sunday is an assembly of all who live either in the cities or in rural districts, and the memoirs of the Apostles and the writings of the Prophets are read." And the Roman writer Pliny, the Governor of the Province of Bithynia, in his letter to the Emperor Trajan, reports the Christians as "accustomed to assemble together on a stated day, before it was light, and to sing hymns to Christ as a God." But in course of time, as the Judaistic idea of the Day of Rest sharpened and its pressure was felt by Gentile Christians, a clear distinction was drawn between the seventh day and the first, and the Lord's Day was separated from the Jewish Sabbath. So the great African Father, Tertullian of Carthage, in the early part of the third century, declared that Christians had "nothing to do with Sabbaths, new

moons, or the Jewish festivals, much less with those of the heathen," but had their "own solemnities, the Lord's Day for instance, and Pentecost." The observance of the seventh day thus gradually ceased even among Jewish Christians. The Emperor Constantine, by his famous Edict of the year 321 A.D., enacted that "on the venerable day of the Sun," while persons engaged in the work of cultivation were to have liberty, magistrates and people residing in the cities were to rest, and all workshops to be closed. And the Council of Laodicea, about 363 A.D., forbade Christians to Judaize by abstinence from work on the seventh day, and instructed them to honour the Lord's Day, and to rest as Christians.

65. THE CHRISTIAN OBLIGATION OF THE DAY.—The history of the ordinance and law of the Day of Rest, as it lies beneath our eye in the Scriptures, is the best interpretation of the purpose of the institution, and its best defence. The experience of what it has been to the home, the Church, and the nation, is the seal of its sanctity. And its authority remains under the Christian law of liberty. The duty of the religious observance of the Lord's Day has been asserted in different ways. Some have based it on the uncertain ground of *Ecclesiastical authority*, reckoning it enough to say that the Church has a right to establish this ordinance as well as others. Some have founded it on *Apostolic authority*, supposing that, in the exercise of the commission received from Christ, Peter and the others gave to the first day of the week the place assigned of old to the seventh. Some have

held it to be a primeval institution of God, which assumed a particular form under the Mosaic Law, but continued in authority after that as before it. Its broad foundations in any case are in these two things, the Moral Law and our Lord's Words. The Mosaic Sabbath in its Jewish form has been replaced by the Lord's Day. But it is not that the Sabbath is simply abolished. That would be inconsistent with Christ's claim, which was not to *destroy* but to *fulfil*, by giving a more perfect embodiment of the Divine idea of the institution, a higher and more spiritual realisation of its purpose. Nor is it that the Fourth Commandment ceases to bind us, though in it as in the Fifth there is something which belongs to a Dispensation of religion which has given place to a higher. The Ten Words embodying the Moral Law remain the rule of the Christian life, to be kept according to the Spirit and by the grace of the Spirit. And the principle of this Fourth Commandment, which is in the heart of the Ten Words, is embodied now in the Lord's Day. No word of Christ, no decree of the Apostles, is on record abrogating the seventh day and appointing the first. Rather was it by a gradual way, under the sense of a Divine propriety and the suggestions of Apostolic practice, that the Old Testament Rest of the seventh day passed into the New Testament Rest of the first day. The Lord's Day has been described, therefore, as "a projection within the Christian Dispensation of the Law of the Jewish Sabbath" (Rigg). The principle of the Day of Rest, it has been well said, asserted once for all in the Revelation to the Jews, "established itself by

the force of an inward law in the Christian Church" (Maurice).

66. **THE CHRISTIAN USE OF THE DAY.**—The New Testament gives no definite prescriptions for the use of the Day. It leaves the Christian man to honour it in consistency with its divine purpose, and with the liberty of the Gospel. The spirit in which it is to be used is stated thus by the great Puritan, John Owen: "Although the day be wholly to be dedicated unto the ends of a sacred rest. . . . yet duties, in their performance drawn out unto such a length as to beget wearisomeness and satiety, tend not unto edification, nor do in any way promote the sanctification of the name of God in the worship itself." Robert Leighton, again, the saintly Bishop of Dunblane, writes of it thus: "They that understand the true use of the holy rest of the Sabbath day do know that it frees the soul, and makes it vacant from earthly things for this purpose, that it may fully apply itself to the worship and contemplation of God, and converse with Him at greater length. Then certainly, where there is this entire love to God this will not weigh heavy, will be no grievous task to it; it will embrace and gladly obey this Fourth Commandment, not only as its duty, but as its great delight. For there is nothing that love rejoices in more than in the converse and society of those on whom it is placed; it would willingly bestow most of its time that way, and thinks all hours too short that are spent in that society. Therefore not only they who profanely break, but they who keep it heavily and wearily, who find it rather a burthen than a delight, may justly suspect

that the love of God is not in them ; but he that keeps His day cheerfully, and loves it, because on it he may more liberally solace and refresh himself in God, may safely take it as an evidence of his love to God." And a noble preacher of our own century, Frederick Robertson of Brighton, who stood on different ground regarding the basis of the Day of Rest, expresses himself in these terms : " The need of the Sabbath is deeply hidden in human nature. He who can dispense with it must be holy and spiritual indeed. And he who, still unholy and unspiritual, would dispense with it, is a man who would fain be wiser than his Maker. We, Christians as we are, still need the law : both in its restraints, and in its aids to our weakness. No man therefore, who knows himself, but will gladly and joyfully use the institution. No man who knows the need of his brethren will wantonly desecrate it or recklessly hurt even their scruples respecting its observance."

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